

LETTERS

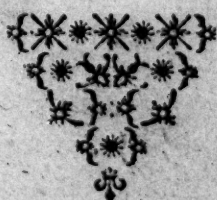
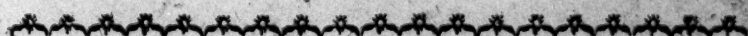
Ann FROM *Wilson 75*
JULIET Lady CATESBY,

TO HER FRIEND

HENRIETTA CAMPLEY.

TRANSTATED FROM THE FRENCH.

The SECOND EDITION.



D U B L I N :

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LETTERS

FROM

Lady JULIET CATESBY,

TO

Lady HENRIETTA CAMPLEY,

HER FRIEND.



LETTER I.

Summer-Hill, Tuesday.

WITH six horses on full speed, relays properly disposed, and an air of the most eager haste, I fly, accompanied by persons for whom I have very little regard, to others, for whom I have no regard at all: I abandon my dearest friends; I leave
A 2 you,

you, you whom I love so tenderly : Ah ! why this departure ! this haste ! why press to arrive, where I do not wish to be ! To remove myself, — from whom ? — From Lord Offory. Ah ! my dear Henrietta, who would once have told me, I should ever have fled from him ? Is he not the same object, whose loss, I imagined, would have deprived me of life ; who, during two years, was always present to my idea, and, whom nothing has power to make me forget ? I fly, then, that I may not meet those eyes, that mine have fought with so much pleasure ; where my destiny seemed wrote, and whose glance once ruled all the movements of my soul. Strange alteration ! what different effects are produced by the same cause ? Heavens ! what was my surprise at seeing him ! How did his mourning, and his air of sorrow strike me ! How ought his wife to regret the loss of life ? What difficulty had I not to turn my head at parting ! Into what a state did that sight ! — But, could you conceive that he has dared to call at my door, — to imagine I would open his letters ? How audacious is this man ? But, are they not all so ?

I am still astonished at the step I have taken. I tell myself every moment I have acted rightly ; I tell myself so, but I do not feel

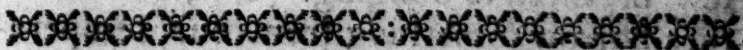


L E T T E R II.

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feel it sufficiently: I seek for reasons to applaud myself on the part I have pursued; I find them, but it is in my pride only. I experience, my dear, that the heart has no taste for those weak lenitives, in which our vanity finds so much consolation.

In fine, I am gone: Behold me, fifty miles from London, and yet not dead; assure my Lord Castle-Cary of this. In spite of his predictions I did not faint away at the foot of the first beech; the afflicted Graces have not yet raised for me that beautiful tomb in which he already saw me laid. Tell him that I do not repent: I can do violence to my sentiments; I can suffer; but I know not how to repent. Adieu! my amiable Henrietta! When you have told his lordship all this, tell yourself, that no body loves you, so much as I do.



L E T T E R II.

Wednesday, Sir John Aston's.

WE are going to leave a very disagreeable house, the master of which, is still more disagreeable. He is one of those troublesome people, one is so sorry

to meet with; the species of whom, is, however, too common; one of those men who fatigue one by their attention to please, and never speak, but in a strain of tedious compliment. He has given us a very plentiful, and a very bad supper; served up with so much ceremony, and such an air of preparation, as could not fail of making the whole company sensible how much trouble they had occasioned.

Sir John has been married six months, as you know; his lady is a young woman, long, lane, pale, foolish, proud, with a termagant air: a little head, set upon a thin neck, and an eternal sneer, without the least trace of gaiety on her countenance. This couple seemed to me, extremely well paired.

Sir Harry is very much attached to lady Elizabeth; except my own, I have seen few brothers so obliging. But, as our virtues borrow something from our temperament, I have discovered that he is naturally attentive and officious; he loves to mix in every thing, to make himself necessary. We have already had two or three quarrels: He will stifle me in the coach, for fear I should get cold; I let down the glass, he pulls it up, and I again let it down; he makes grave representations to me on the subject; I, with all gentleness, explain to him

him my will ; he insists ; I am obstinate ; he gives it up with reluctance ; and when I have put him into a very bad humour, he chides, and I recover the liberty of breathing.

For Sir James, his character is sweetness, complaisance, and grace, united to gaiety ; he speaks just what he ought, he expresses himself agreeably, and what he says amuses : Lady Elizabeth is enchanted with him : You know how lively her approbations are ; it is happy for her, they are not lasting enough to convert themselves into tenderer sentiments.

I endeavour to busy myself about others, that I may drive away those woes which bring me back to myself. Sometimes I flatter myself that I no longer love ; that what I felt at seeing my lord Offery was more owing to hatred, than to a softer passion.—I hate him, perhaps,—Ah ! why should I not hate him ?—I hope at least, that I shall become calm enough to see him, to speak to him, to treat him with the most mortifying disdain.—O, no—I will never speak to him, will never see him.—Here is Sir Harry, he teases me, he will not wait ; this is one of his faults ; not the least patience. Adieu ! love me, love me as you know you are beloved by me.

LETTER III.

Thursday, Lord Danby's.

I Write to you, from the most agreeable place, perhaps, in nature : From my window I have a view of the woods, waters, meadows, the most beautiful landscape imaginable : Every thing expresses calmness and tranquillity : This smiling abode, is an image of the soft peace, which reigns in the soul of the sage who inhabits it. This amiable dwelling carries one insensibly to reflect ; to retire into one's self ; but one cannot at all times relish this kind of retreat ; one may find in the recesses of the heart, more importunate pursuers than those from whom solitude delivers us.

Lord Danby received us perfectly well ; could one imagine a man like him would not think retirement a misfortune ? It is rare, very rare, my dear, that persons born in a high rank, educated in the hurry of the world, in the toilsome inactivity of a court, can find in themselves the resources against lassitude. The remembrance of the past, often offers nothing to their view but a chain of follies and weaknesses, which seen in cold blood, appear in their true colour. One must have all my Lord Danby's virtues

virtues, to find the examination of one's own heart a pleasing employment.

I have found out, that Sir Harry is as curious as he is attentive: He stopped our women an hour, to ask a thousand questions of Betty: He has remarked the sighs that escape me, he fancies there is a secret in one of my boxes, he has offered her ten guineas to assure him of it. He is astonished that I write to you every day; he cannot conceive the reason of so regular a correspondence. Is it really to you I write? What think you of these impertinent enquiries? they cost me twelve guineas, for I fancy I ought to reward Betty's fidelity, for fear, upon reflection, she might repent of it.

The man knows not what he would have, he wearies me, he displeases me.— I believe really, he intends.—Ah! how odious would he then be to me.—Don't I see him?—Heaven! what a look!—He certainly divines I am speaking of him. It is my letter which puts him into this ill humour.—I promise you, Sir Harry, I shall write every day, therefore be so good to use yourself to it.—But his sister comes,—I must leave you; my dear friend Adieu! tell my Lord Castle-Cary, I do not forget him.

L E T T E R IV.

From the Mansion of Sir George Howard,
your humble adorer.

Friday,

I Congratulate you, my Henrietta, on so obstinately refusing to become the mistress of this savage habitation. Miss Bidulph, who, upon your refusal has accepted the heart, the hand, and the whole immense person of Sir George our host, is a much properer person than yourself, to procure him that species of happiness, which he is capable of tasting.

Lady Howard is a very little woman, handsome enough, and not coquet; she manages his family, governs his tenants, scolds his servants; brings him children, works tapestry for his rooms, does not read for fear of spoiling her eyes, consults the chaplain, interdicts love in all her dominions, marries her dependants, treats the most trifling affairs seriously, and makes an important business of the least thing in the world.

Let us, however, see a little nearer this happy woman, this woman, who will laugh till her last hour: If she laughs, my dear, we should weep, we, who so little resemble

L E T T E R IV.

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resemble her. We should think it strange, if this notable woman had more merit than we; it is, however, certain, she has more happiness. Her life is simple and uniform; but she is quiet and useful; to-morrow will produce no painful change in her situation; her soul is always open to the impression of pleasure. But what pleasure, you will say? Ah! my dear Henrietta, are there, then, so many kinds? A long study of ourselves, reason, and knowledge, do they render us more happy? I know not what idea others have of this light we call understanding; it appears to my imagination like a torch, which the first breath of air may extinguish: It brightens the darkness a little, but does not half dissipate it; its weak light is sufficient to shew us, that we walk on the edge of a precipice, but not to point out the slippery path where our feet may fail us; we fall, my dear, and when at the bottom of the abyss, have the advantage of reflecting that if we had seen clearer, we had not been there.

I am not absolutely unhappy: I begin to believe, that the misfortunes we bring on ourselves, are easier to support than those we owe to others. A kind of, I know not what secret emotion assists us to support them; I wish it may not be vanity. Adieu!

dieu! my amiable friend! how does Lord Castle-Cary in my absence? I am no longer present to make up your quarrels, therefore you ought to engage in them the seldomer. When he vexes you a little, remember he is my relation, and my friend: He has many estimable qualities, he is worthy of your heart,---If, however, there is a man in the world, worthy the tenderness of woman, who thinks justly.



LETTER V.

Saturday, Mortimer-house.

WE are now, my dear Henrietta, at a most delightful seat; during two months, gaiety has presided here: It belongs to a widow, scarce twenty. Enchanted with her new state, she comes to pass the year of her mourning here, only to meditate in peace on her future choice, when decency will permit her to make herself-amends for what she suffered with an old husband, whom she hated with all her heart. She has the most beautiful face you can conceive, a fine height, an air of dignity, and a most engaging sincerity; in giving an account of her sufferings, she scarce can smother her laughter. The old
lord

lord was jealous, and she could have over-reach'd him, she could.—This agreeable silly creature has just as much sense, as is necessary to amuse herself, and to please.

Miss Annabella, her sister, is a very different creature: Was never out of this magnificent seat, where she has always lived with her father only. Her figure is noble, and interesting, her air sweet and delicate; she has a great deal of breeding, and more sentiment. She wants nothing, in short, but knowledge of the world; but if she has not all the graces which that bestows, she is free from the vices to which it leads; vices, which, it is so difficult to avoid in polite circles, where they have found the contemptible art of forgiving mutually every defect of the heart. I am always enraged, when I hear this criminal indulgence, honoured with the name of softness of manners, knowledge of human nature, and a condescension indispensable in society. O! this Sir Harry;—he is insupportable; every thing displeases him---I thought him of a more equal temper: People must be very amiable to appear so to those who see them every day; I am out of patience with him; he advises me to throw away a nosegay that Sir James has gathered himself, and has just given me; Sir Harry has not breathed since I

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have

have had it; he brings me twenty examples of illness, occasioned by the too strong perfume of Jonquills; he assures me they are very bad for the head. As I see his impertinent jealousy, I shall keep the nose-gay; I would keep it, if it gave me a thousand headaches. I shall be at Winchester to-morrow, I shall find your letters there, it is the only pleasure I promise myself. Adieu! My tenderest respects to my Lord Castle-Cary.

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L E T T E R VI.

Sunday, Winchester.

I Received your letters, as soon as I arrived here; you cannot doubt, my dear Henrietta, of the sincere pleasure I felt in reading them. Every moment of my life, your friendship has been dear to me: for a long time my heart was satisfied with it: How happy was I then! If my soul is now possessed, too feelingly possessed, by less voluntary, and more tumultuous sentiments, believe me, they have not weakened that tender and solid affection, which attaches me to you: The amiable qualities, which gave birth to this friendship, owe nothing
to

to illusion ; can either time or absence destroy it.

My firmness astonishes you. Ah! my good God! This effort, which you admire, would, if I was able to examine it without passion, lose much of the value we both set upon it. What is it that I sacrifice? Of what good do I deprive myself? Of the sweetness, perhaps, of being again deceived! But can I abandon myself to this pleasure, when I have lost that of deceiving myself?

You bid me pardon my Lord Ossory, or think no more of him. Pardon him? Ah! never! think no more of him! I think of him certainly as little as I can; I no longer think of him with pleasure: I no longer think of him with regret;—I think of him.—Alas! my dear! because it is impossible for me not to think of him. Remembrance will not leave us; we fancy we lose it in the world, but a moment of solitude restores all its force, which dissipation seemed to have taken away. When alone, that idea, once so dear to me, is ever present to my imagination; I see again that form.—How did the soul, which, I believed, animated that ungrateful man, embellish all his features! What a perfect creature did it offer to my eyes! Ah! why, why, has it torn away the amiable veil which hid his

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vices, and his falshood, from me?—So much candor in that countenance, and so much perfidy, so much ingratitude, in that heart! Oh! that he is not as noble, as generous as I believed him?—Yes, my greatest misfortune is, being forced to despise him. Adieu! my good, my beloved friend? I am not in a state to reply to all you ask—How weak am I still!—Ought I to speak of him!—I can fly him, renounce, hate, detest him: But to forget him.—Alas! I cannot forget him.



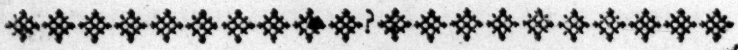
L E T T E R VII.

Wednesday, Winchester.

I Have this instant received a letter from Lord Castle-Cary, which he certainly has not communicated to you. He treats my flight, as a piece of female cunning; he does not absolutely tell me so, but that is what he would say. He thinks my intention is to mortify poor Lord Ossory, to try him, to make him miserable, and at last to pardon him. The idea which he has of my designs, does not give me a high opinion of the manner in which he himself pardons. Let this suffice, till I am in a humour to answer him. I should, indeed,

deed, despise myself, if I was capable of so low an artifice; if believing I could forgive him—forgive him, Henrietta! —if I could, and had the cruelty to make him wait for my forgiveness, and to play with the suspense of a man, that I meant to make happy. I should despise myself indeed. No, my dear Henrietta, I will never oblige any one to purchase a benefit I intend them. Either I know myself very ill, or it is not in my nature to pardon him. I should promise it in vain. The sorrows I have felt, are for ever engraven on my memory: I am very far from desiring it should be in my power, to inflict an equal share of misery on him; my hatred is as generous as my friendship was tender: I shall confine its effects to flying the presence of the ingrate. My Lord Castle-Cary pretends, that all resentment ought to yield to a sincere repentance. With my inferiors, I will govern myself by this maxim, but never with my friends. But, my dear, it will not be useless to make a little remark here: It is, that men only establish this principle, in hopes to take advantage of it: Accustom yourself to think, with my Lord Castle-Cary, that repentance effaces all faults, and depend on it, he will provide himself of sufficient occasions to repent. His letter displeases me, I con-

fefs : I renounce his approbation : It would cost me too dear, If I must buy it by a weakness, which would degrade me in my own eyes : I have always regarded as the greatest of all misfortunes, the loss of one's own good opinion : One may enjoy the esteem of others, without deserving it. We may owe it to dissimulation ; but what must become of our internal peace, when we can no longer esteem ourselves ? My Lord Castle-Cary is very singular to expect I should submit to his decision, in an affair of which he knows so little. Reprimand him, reprimand him heartily, I beg of you.



L E T T E R VIII.

Tuesday, Winchester.

YOU ask me, how I spend my time, with whom I am, and who, of my present companions are most agreeable to me. Alas ! I am weary of myself ; I am with all the world, and no-body pleases me enough to engage my attention. We are here, fifteen or sixteen of us from London, without counting the neighbouring people of fashion, of whom the house is
always

always full. This continual crowd rather distracts than amuses me.

Lord Wilton has a violent passion for the fine arts : He has laboured hard to acquire them, but nature has denied him the talents which bring them into view, and that taste, which only can give them perfection. With a strong voice, he sings disagreeably ; and dances with a bad grace, though industriously exact in the steps. He designs correctly, paints little screens which are neither pretty nor ugly ; and makes detestable verses with great facility. Every day gives birth to a thousand couplets, and madrigals, in which Cupid, Venus, Hebe, all Olympus, find themselves, whether they will or no, at the feet of the terrestrial divinities of the castle.—You assume, when you arrive, the name which Rhyme is pleased to confer on you. As to the rest, my Lord is a worthy man ; I do not believe he has a fault, except that of desiring to be what he is not. Born with simplicity, courtesy, and a moderate understanding, if he had not pretended to superiority, he had escaped the mortification of seeing himself ridiculous.—His lady—But some-body comes.—Who is it ?—Ah ! who can it be but Sir Harry !—But who has subjected me to Sir Harry's importunities ? Why must I suffer them ? What
right

right has he to weary me thus? Ah! my dear Henrietta, what enemy to the human race; invented that falshood, which, under the name of politeness, commands our civilities, and forces us to constrain ourselves?—This troublesome creature gets admittance into my closet; insensibly he gains ground; he is always at my side.—He almost reads what I am writing.—I wish he read this, to teach him.—I continue writing on purpose.—Sir Harry, be so obliging,—give me leave.—He bows, sighs, and stays; he stays indeed. In the humour I am in, I wish he would speak, that he would tell me, he loves me.—I would give a thousand guineas, he would make that confession.—Since my ill stars will fix me here, I must leave you.

TUESDAY NIGHT.

As I was going to tell you this morning, Lady Wilton is very amiable; she thinks justly, behaves with decorum, and without affectation; she is handsome, well made; by her bloom, one would imagine her younger than Lady Elizabeth her sister. She loves her lord, sees his weak side, never laughs at it herself: and by her serious air, prevents others from rallying him. Devout towards God; she serves him without

out ostentation ; severe to herself, complaisant to her friends, easy and gentle to all the world, she claims little attention, but attracts the highest, and possesses the respect and sincere admiration of all who know her.

We have here the new countess of Ranelagh, a little giddy-brain, who loves nothing but noise and play ; She is pretty, but without character : How disagreeable a state ! I have observed, that this species of people adopt the faults of every body they converse with.

But she, who pretends to the glory of eclipsing all, of conquering all hearts, is the beautiful countess of Southampton ; always lovely, lovely from morning till night, ever in the attitude of sitting for her picture, she thinks of nothing but how to appear most beautiful, and talks of nothing but the effects of her charms. If any man addresses his conversation to her, she is so convinced he is going to make her a compliment, that an air of thanks precedes her attention to what he is to say. All our ladies are busied in rallying her ; in spite of every thing they can say, the countess pleases all eyes, but, she pleases the eyes only.

We have Sir William Manly, gay, agreeable, simple, plain ; a true English-
man,

man, attached to the manners, to the laws, to the customs of his country. He is of a very ancient family, but little distinguished by court favour; and, thinks his birth infinitely preferable to new, tho' higher titles. Possessor of the finest estate in the county, he lives in the midst of his dependants, like a tender father, surrounded by his children, who adore him; without ever thinking he is above them, except when his superiority can remove their miseries, or procure them any advantages. In the commission of the peace for a large county, he has laboured to instruct himself in what so many others neglect, the duties of this trust, and joins knowledge to the most equitable integrity. This is a man, my dear, and the only one here, who deserves that appellation.

But the idol of all our ladies, is Sydney, the youngest of those Sydney's you are acquainted with: He is a young baronet, not very rich, but infinitely proud notwithstanding: he is tall, well made, has the finest hair in the World, admirable teeth, some wit, very little sense, and a great deal of trifling jargon. He knows nothing, talks of every thing, lies with impudence; is knowing in dogs, horses, baubles, despises every body, admires himself

self sincerely, decides without ceasing, tires people of taste, shines amongst fools, and passes here for a charming fellow: Adieu! my dearest friend! I embrace my Lord Castle-Cary, though I do not pardon him.



L E T T E R IX.

Wednesday, Winchester.

THEY have brought me two of your letters; I ought to have received them yesterday; I was very uneasy about them: Sir Harry thought they must have been forgot, he went seven miles to enquire for them; I believe I have a bad heart, for I am angry at having this obligation to him.

What you tell me of the rupture between Sir Charles and Lady Selby, appears to me incredible. What? that lover, so passionate who adored her, who could not live without seeing her, and who threatened in his jealous furies, to stab himself before her eyes? he has quitted her, and with that unconcernedness, that éclat, without troubling himself either about her, or the world!—Happy men! what advantage does difference of education,

tion, prejudice, and custom, give to that daring sex, who blush at nothing, say and do whatever they please! what arts will man not practise, when impelled by interest, or by pride! He cringes at our feet, without being ashamed; our scorn does not abase him, our disdain cannot repulse him: Mean when he desires, insolent when he hopes, ungrateful when he has obtained. Supple, and insinuating serpent; who, like that in Milton, takest every form, tryest every art to engage our attention; and then conveyest thyself from the snare thou hast spread for us!—Poor Lady Selby! How I pity her! How bitter is it to be abandoned! Ah! my dear Henrietta! with what levity you speak of her situation! If you had ever felt that tormenting misery.—May you never feel it!—This relation has recalled to my memory those hours when my erring heart—But I will think of it no more.

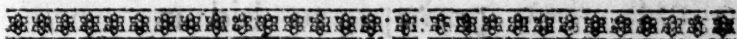
Have I told you that we have here the famous Countess of Sunderland, so beautiful, so indifferent, so beloved, and so esteemed, not only in England, but in the northern courts, of which she was the admiration? she is near forty, and does not appear thirty? I cannot better paint her to you, than by sending you the copy of a letter she wrote to Sir William Manly: He

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L E T T E R X.

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has preserved it carefully ever since he received it, which is thirteen years. He has traced the outlines of it to me, which has given me a great desire to see it, and he has promised me to send for the box in which it is kept. This letter, he says, perfectly characterises the Countess. He was in love with her, and cannot see her even now, without emotion. He had wrote her a declaration of love, and it is her answer to that declaration, which I am to see. As soon as I have this wonderful epistle, I will communicate it to you. Adieu! my charming friend.



L E T T E R X.

Thursday, Winchester.

YOU are cruelly exact, my dear Henrietta : You promised me not to mention Lord Offory, and you keep your word, with a punctuality that I admire. I did not wish you should entertain me with his sentiments, with my own, or the caprice which brings him back to me : But, to leave me in ignorance, whether he is yet in London, whether he intends staying there, what he is doing, whether he endeavours to see my Lord Castle-Cary ; this

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is hard, yes, very hard, indeed. It is sometimes kind to fail a little in complying with one's request.—But why this vain curiosity?—What interest have I?—Persevere,——Tell me nothing of him, my temper is grown very bad, every thing displeases me: Sir Harry makes this place disagreeable to me; he besets me, he fatigues me, wherever I turn I see only him; he follows me, he meets me every where. Scarce am I a moment in my closet, before he enters with an air of some important business: You would suppose, by his looks, something very interesting brought him there, he has nothing to say to me, but perhaps, to bid me good-morrow. He goes out, he comes back, he seems disturbed, he takes out of Betty's hands, whatever she was going to bring me, disorders my books, throws them down, asks me for tea, goes away without drinking it; returns to tell me he is ill, overwhelmed with anguish, that he is dying. He walks with his arms across, sighs, groans, does not die, and exhausts my patience to that degree, that I find it difficult to behave to him with politeness. How I hate love! How I hate all who entertain the cruel design of inspiring me with it!—Sir James desires a moment's conversation with me: He has formed a project,

project, he says, which he will submit to my decision : He regards me with an air that—He speaks to me with such a loud tone of voice—What can he have to say to me ?——I have one obligation to Lord Ossory, the remembrance of him will be my preservative, my eternal preservative, against all his sex. Who can appear amiable to me, after my Lord Ossory ? Who can inspire me with confidence, when my Lord Ossory has deceived me ? How different are all I see from him ?——But my dear, I must think no more of him.—Alas ! how difficult is it to forget him.

I enclose the letter I promised you : Sir William has allowed me to take a copy ; you will have the goodness to send it me back ?

TO SIR WILLIAM MANLY.

My esteem for Sir William Manly, engages me to explain myself to him, with a freedom, which I should, perhaps, dispense with myself, from using to another. You are amiable, well made, modest ; you appear prudent, and I believe you discreet. So many perfections, if you join constancy to them, will render the woman who loves you, happy. They would justify her choice in her own eyes, as well as in those

of others : An uncommon advantage, which would determine me in your favour, if love was a sentiment to which I chose to give up my heart. My reasons for avoiding this passion, are not founded on those prejudices, which have for a long time lost much of their influence : The present custom allows me to have a lover, and, perhaps, I should not esteem myself less, if my taste led me to admit one. What I owe to my Lord Sunderland, would, however, restrain me ; if he had the generosity to think our promises were mutual. He neglected me at a time when the slightest complaisance would have engaged my most tender attachment : I sincerely thank him, for leaving me to that indifference, which he deserves I should feel for him : It is extreme, he knows it, and if I do not give publick marks of it, it is only from regard to myself, not thinking it decent to shew contempt for the man, whose name I bear.

Left to my own reflections, I have long made it my employment to consider with a philosophic attention, the world, the different seasons of human life ; the duration, or to speak with more propriety, the perpetual vicissitude, of all sublunary things. My most serious study has been to examine the virtues, and the failings of my
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my own sex; I have endeavoured to discover the guides which are given us, to lead us safely through the difficult paths in which we tread. I have seen, Sir William, that coquetry, weakness, and pride, are the portion of both sexes; but particularly of my own. To pride, well understood, and turned towards its noblest object, women owe their virtue. Coquetry, in just bounds, makes them agreeable; weakness makes some wretched, and others contemptible. Our taste ranks us indispensably in one of these classes; mine has decided for me, pride is my choice. Those who esteem nothing but the frivolous advantage of being lovely, pass one part of their lives, in applauding themselves on their charms, and the other in lamenting their loss. What a ridiculous part does a coquet play, when she has no longer those attractions she would still be thought to possess! Weak women are to be pitied; the sensibility of their hearts, is a rock on which their reason is shipwrecked: Too often they preserve the habit of loving, long after they have lost the power to please; They become the jest of young ingrates, who address, deceive, and expose them to public contempt and infamy.

Pride has none of these inconveniencies ; she enjoys the past, the present, and the future ; has always the same pleasures, age cannot destroy them ; she loves and admires herself for ever. Is one not happier, Sir William, in indulging a sentiment, which one is certain, will always be pleasing, than in giving way to those which captivate our wills, and make our happiness depend on the caprice and inconstancy of others ? In whatever light my choice may appear to you, believe that nothing can make me renounce it. If my friendship is dear to you, abandon for ever, the useless design of troubling the sweetness of my life ; and by a conduct conformable to my principles, render yourself worthy of my confidence and my esteem.

Behold here a woman, who is the object of universal esteem, and respect : And wherefore ? Because she has loved herself to such a degree, as to leave no room for the love of any other being. She has excited the admiration of all the world, but she has made the happiness of no-body, possibly not even of herself. To oppose continually, that tender inclination, which carries us—To what, my dear ! To lament one day, the loss of a blessing——which one moment may change into the bitterest anguish. Is tenderness then, so estimable ?

Are

Are its pleasures great enough, to recompense the pangs with which its loss overwhelms us? I know not whether I see the Countess's virtues, and her reasoning, in a just light: But, her class of weak women, seems to me, that of good hearts.



L E T T E R X I.

Friday, Winchester.

HOW! my dear Henrietta! he is gone! They know not whither! You fear he is in France. — And why fear it! --- Ah! whether he stays, or goes abroad, what is it to me? --- What interest ought I to take in it? --- He is dead to me. --- Yet it is sweet however; to think he lives for no other than myself.

I am afflicted, my dear friend; I know not what I would have: Disgust and insipidity are diffused around me; the manner of living here wearies me, without dissipating my chagrin. Ruinous gaming, long repasts, a great deal of music, little repose, continual noise, none of those calm delights I promised myself in the country. --- You are sure, my Lord Ossory is no longer in town, yet, if his family is there,

there,—one would suppose,—In France?—
Why in France?—The Marchioness of
Dorchester, whom he once loved is just
gone thither.—Perhaps, his passion for her
is revived.—does my Lord Castle-Cary
hide nothing from you! The manner in
which he writes to me, gives me suspicions.
—Ah! what is all this to me? Why do I
torment myself? Lady Elizabeth begs you
will send her a white Domino, very gen-
teel, that is, very much adorned. Send
me one also; let it be,—my God, whate-
ver you please: It is for a masquerade,
that my Lord Wilton is to give: One is
fatigued with pleasures here.—To go away
without seeing Lord Castle-Cary, without
endeavouring to be acquainted with you,
to speak to you,—not to strive to find out
where I am, to know from myself! —
Strange, inconceivable creature! He ap-
peared full of ardour: He “could not live
without seeing me again, without appeasing
me.—To recover his heart or to die,” said
he to Betty, the day that she came, all in
tears, to beg I would receive his visit, and
hear him!—And yet he is gone! He is
gone! my dear, and has not seen my Lord
Castle-Cary. Where-ever he is, I wish him
all the happiness I desire for myself. But
why, accuse me of cruelty, and reproach
me for his departure? Ah! my dear Hen-
rietta!

L E T T E R XII.

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rietta! You love Lord Castle-Cary more than you imagine! You adopt his stile, without perceiving it. Adieu! Here is Sir Harry: I am very proper at present to converse with him.



L E T T E R XII.

Saturday, Winchester.

I AM weary to death of this place, my dear. How do I already regret your closet, my own, the sweetness of those conversations which an unbounded confidence rendered so animated, those simple amusements, those hours so usefully past in reading. If chagrin sometimes broke in upon our tranquillity, at least coldness never found a place in our hearts. One seems free here, and yet constraint is hid under that seeming liberty: Every one has the freedom of doing what he will, but not of speaking what he thinks. How little satisfaction does the great world, that brilliant society, called good company, give to those who examine it attentively! It is neither taste nor the heart, nor even the hope of pleasure, which draws together these fantastical beings, born to possess much, to desire more, and to enjoy nothing. They
seek

seek each other, without being impelled by affection; they meet without being pleased, and part without regret. What is it then, which unites them? Equality of rank, and of fortune, custom, weariness of themselves; that necessity of dissipation, which they feel perpetually, and which seems attached to greatness, riches, and splendor; in short, to all those goods, which Heaven has not equally distributed to all its creatures.

What bonds, my dear, and what friends for a heart like mine! Little accustomed to disguise my sentiments, what pleasure can I find amongst those to whom I cannot avow them, without reserve? One must be in a very happy situation to amuse one's self with those, for whom one has no tenderness; but I am too full of reflection: I weary you, perhaps. Adieu! in whatever humour I am, I love you always; yes, with all my heart.

LETTER XIII.

Sunday, Winchester.

TWO of your letters!---He is not come back.---They know not where he is---One from my Lord Castle-Cary.---He tells me nothing; but he chides me, and in a style, that he would have me take for that of friendship---for that of reason---I will certainly answer him. He complains to me of the little complaisance you shew him: Why, my dear Henrietta, have you not told him what you know of me, what I consented you should communicate to him? You will not let this man see to what an excess another has been beloved. The excuse is disobliging? is he then to blame for being angry? Though he is my most esteemed friend, I have a kind of repugnance to confess to him my weaknesses. I will, however, tell him all: he will at least be convinced, that those caprices with which our sex is reproached, have no share in my resentment. You are not upon good terms with Sir Harry; it is a misfortune I cannot hide from you: he asked me yesterday, why you had deferred your marriage with Lord Castle-Cary till summer:

summer : I told him you chose to wait your Uncle's return, who was to come back at that time from his embassy. A quarter of an hour after he repeated the same question, and I made him exactly the same reply. "Cruel woman," he exclaimed, "to impose so hard a condition!-----If I was Castle-Cary."-----If you was, sir ? said I, ---"I believe."---You believe?---"I hope your ladyship is not offended."---But pray, if you were Castle-Cary?-----"I dare not speak ;-----I have the unhappiness to displease you,---to be troublesome to you, notwithstanding, Madam"---Upon this, he rose from his seat, took Heaven to witness to I know not what, walked about very fast, began a conversation with himself, and all this with an air so gloomy, so afflicted, so melancholy.---And has remained ever since so disconcerted---But here he comes more sad, more indisposed, more dying, than ever : He brings me some pamphlets, I am sure they are worth nothing, even before I see them.

L E T T E R X I V .

Monday, Winchester.

I Write this post to Lord Castle-Cary, and give him that detail he could not obtain from you. His long friendship for my Lord Ossory persuades him, that the usage of which I complain, cannot be unpardonable. I flatter myself, he will judge otherwise ; he shall no longer at least, have an excuse for tiring me with common-place arguments. To tell you the truth, my dear Henrietta, I would on no account, that any other person should see this history ; it appears to me a disagreeable circumstance to have one, and if I was to think seriously, I should probably destroy this. I spent part of the night in writing it ; I cannot express to you how much this employmet has disordered me. As soon as Lord Castle-Cary has read this packet, do me the favour to burn it. I cannot answer your letter ; you were very gay, my dear, when you wrote it ; I am not enough so at present to reply.

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To

To Lord CASTLE-CARY.

NO, my Lord, I have not that spirit of obstinacy, which could lead me to afflict myself, that another may share in my pains ; but I have that noble firmness, which distinguishes generous minds from those mean souls, always ready to receive any impression you wish to give them. Determined in my resolutions by unalterable principles, I am capable of those exalted efforts which honour demands ; and what I believe my duty, shall always regulate my conduct, and my ideas of happiness. “ He has wrong’d you,” you say, “ he is sensible of it, he returns ; you reject his submissions : this proceeding is inconsistent with your character : you still love, you are still beloved ; you ought to pardon.” And why ought I my Lord ? You had a quarrel with Mr. Sternill, he had insulted you in a moment of madness, he acknowledg’d his fault, he offer’d you all the satisfaction in his power ; you knew he loved you : notwithstanding this, you refused to hear him ; nothing could prevail on you to consent to an accommodation : and for a doubtful jest, a word escaped in the heat of a foolish dispute, you stretched dead at your feet him, whom you had an
hundred

hundred times called by the tender name of friend. Did any one blame your inflexibility? and why must I pardon? I, who have been insulted with cool reflection, with premeditated design, under the veil of friendship, of love, of all those sentiments, which have power to touch a grateful and tender heart? Ah! what right has one sex to sport with the softness and sensibility of the other?

If custom has made the point of honour different between us, if I am not forced to revenge myself publickly, ought my resentment to be the less lively? Ought it to yield to the advances of an enemy, who must have expiated with his life, a much less injury, had it been offered to your Lordship? What are your pretensions to insult, or to revenge? What pride persuades you that you have a right to punish, when you think I ought to pardon?

Don't, my Lord, give me prejudices for laws, nor usurpation as a title; time and possession may strengthen the power of injustice, but cannot make it lawful. In the difficult road we have travelled together, Heaven has placed us in the same path; I have spirit to keep up to you, my Lord, and can allow no distinction between creatures, who feel, think, and act, in the same manner.

But I hate to declaim; and though your letter is very proper to animate me, I will carry the subject no farther. I will give you the account you have desired; I even consent to make you the arbiter between Lord Offory and me: Prepared, however, to appeal from your judgement, if you condemn me after the facts I am going to disclose,

The History of Lady Catesby, and Lord Offory.

WHAT I am going to confide to your lordship, is interesting only to a friend. Wholly engrossed by my afflictions, I am, notwithstanding, fully sensible, they contain nothing extraordinary, but the manner in which I have felt them; but events appear to us in a very different light, from the difference of our characters: I am, inconsolable under a misfortune, which would perhaps, have been very light to another.

Married at sixteen, and a widow at eighteen, I returned to London, just at the time you set out for Vienna; nothing then promised me the considerable fortune I have since been mistress of. Without ambition, without fondness for splendor, I did not wish for that fortune! Alas! would
my

my brother still enjoyed it! What riches can make me forget him! How willingly would I part with all this idle pomp to recover a friend so dear to me! you loved him, my Lord, and you know how justly I regret him. He left us to go into France, and I remained with my aunt, who had been a parent to us both. Lady Anne her daughter, marrying Lord Osmond, and my aunt giving up to them her house in Pall-mall, it was fixed, I should continue with Lady Osmond.

My Lord Catesby's extreme jealousy had accustomed me to retirement : I found little pleasure in the great world : Reading and mulick employed all my time. The men thought me amiable : they told me so ; but without being insensible to the pleasure of admiration, I was infinitely so to the cares of my lovers. I laughed at their transports ; and ridiculing the follies of which love made them guilty, I fancied reason and pride would always secure me from its power.

Soon after my cousin's marriage, we left London for Hertfordshire, Lord Ossory and Mr. Ashby returned, at that time, one of them from France, and the other from Italy : As they were both friends to my Lord Ossmond, they were invited to Hertford, they set out directly, and arrived

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together.

together. I was with Lady Osmond, when my Lord presented them to her : The moment I cast my eyes on one of them, my taste was for ever fixed.

Lord Ossory professed himself an enemy to love : till I saw him, I was perfectly indifferent : this conformity of humours on which they sometimes rallied us, was the first bond of that friendship, which united us : He talked of love, but it was always to complain of its rigor ; he seemed to know only its pains. My heart, which already sympathized with him, took a secret interest in his discourses ; I repeated them to myself when alone, and supposing he regretted an unfaithful mistress, I partook of his chagrin : I was astonished how she could ever cease to love him, and it seemed to me, that a woman who could betray or abandon him, must be born more perfidious than all others.

I past some time without attending to the pleasure I felt in seeing Lord Ossory : I gave myself up to it without reflection ; and only observed, that since his coming to Hertford, every thing was become more interesting to me.

Mr. Ashby declared himself my lover : You know his passions are lively, but of short duration ; he addressed me with the most impatient ardor, but that ardor appeared

peared to me importunate. Lord Osmond wished he might please me; he even gave him hopes, but I destroyed them the moment he spoke to me on the subject. Mr. Ashby grew insupportable to me; he became melancholy, jealous, impertinent; he quarrelled with me often, and passed whole days in hunting to avoid me. My Lord Offory on these occasions, rallied me on his absence; told me, laughing, he saw I was afflicted at it, and offered himself to represent Mr. Ashby. He took his place near me, imitated his little cares; gathered flowers, and presented them to me with that timid countenance, that air of sadness, from which unhappy love cannot preserve itself, and which adds to the disgust of the beloved object. My Lord mixed so much grace with every thing he did, that this pleasantry, though repeated often, was always new and entertaining: it engaged us to seek each other; and when our conversation took a more serious turn, Lord Offory lamented Mr. Ashby's unhappiness, and told me, he could not conceive any misfortune equal to that of loving me, and being displeasing to me. One morning when I had been walking a long time with Mr. Ashby, by one of his common caprices, he changed his humour on a sudden, and appeared infinitely gay, and lively:

ly : my Lord Offory assumed a serious air ; I saw a coldness in his looks ; I was shocked at it ; an unknown emotion took possession of my heart, and gave me inexpressible torment. I would have spoke to Lord Offory, to ask the reason of his sadness, but far from seizing those opportunities I gave him of approaching me, he did not seem to give the least attention to my design. The hours past, and the day was at an end, without his having deigned to address to me a single word. How long did that day appear ! what despite did I feel against Lord Offory ! I resented his behaviour so much, that I thought I hated him. The moment I was alone, the tears gushed from my eyes, they removed the oppression of my heart, and gave me liberty to reflect on the secret cause of that sentiment, which made them flow.

Why torment myself because of my Lord Offory's coldness ? Why desire to speak to him ? What had I to say to him ? And why interest myself in the change of his temper ? these questions which I put to myself, discovered to me at once the passion, to which I had given up my heart, without knowing it.

Shall I tell you more, my Lord ? In confessing it, I had also the weakness to pardon myself this attachment. I found Lord
Offory

Offory so worthy to be beloved ; the charms of his wit, the graces of his person, his air, his features, the nobleness of his sentiments, a thousand amiable qualities, the virtues he really possessed, those which my love added to them ; every thing in him seemed proper to augment, and to justify my tenderness : I vowed never to discover my passion, but I vowed also to carry it to my grave.

I appeared in the morning with such an air of despondency, as made every body apprehensive for my health. Lord Offory discovered so much inquietude, shewed himself so touched with my languor, that the lively interest he took in it, dispelled it in a moment ; whilst I beheld him, whilst I listened to him, my gaiety returned, and brought back to my countenance that chearful lustre, which chagrin had banished thence. From that moment I carefully observed the progress of my conquest ; my Lord shewed the warmest friendship for me, but he shewed no more than friendship.

The winter brought us back to town ; I saw Lord Offory seldomer ; I became melancholy, thoughtful ; I felt a disgust for all those amusements, which pleased me before I had given away my heart. Lady Henrietta was then at Venice with her father :

ther : deprived of the only friend with whom I dared to trust my sorrows, I kept a perpetual guard on myself to conceal them : sometimes I blushed at my love ; I regretted my past tranquillity ; I determined no longer to give way to my sentiments ; I struggled with them ; I examined my lord with attention ; I sought to find defects in him ; I wished it was possible he could displease me ; but the more I saw, the more I heard of him, the more convinced I was that he was truly worthy of all the love I felt for him.

Mr. Ashby, whose levity was extreme, tired of my indifference, addressed his vows to Miss Germain ; his infidelity made us friends : as his new mistress was often with me, he begged of me not to teach her to use him ill. My Lord Offory had always a place in our conversation : We speak, without intending it, of the object, who is dear to us : his name is, without ceasing, on the borders of our lips ; we would with-hold it, but it escapes us : we have pronounced it a hundred times, when we fancy we have not pronounced it once. Whether Mr. Ashby penetrated my secret thoughts, and wished to revenge himself, or whether he really believed what he asserted, he repeated it to me continually that he should pity extremely that woman
who

who attached herself to Lord Ossory : he painted him solid, amiable, generous ; but insensible. He chagrined me by his discourse, yet I was never weary of listening to it : Lord Ossory was talked of, though to his disadvantage, and all conversation, of which Lord Ossory was the subject, had an attractive charm for me.

I passed part of the winter in all the pangs of suspense ; my lord's attention, his assiduity, redoubled ; a thousand little cares which proceed from the heart alone, and which the heart alone knows how to set a just value on, all persuaded me that I was beloved ; but he had never told me so : and that doubt inseparable from true passion, that fear which raises obstacles to our desires, and destroys our fondest hopes, made me always distrust those proofs that I thought he gave me of his tenderness. Whilst he was with me, the softest tranquillity reigned in my soul, my dearest wishes seemed fulfilled ; when he was absent, I felt all my inquietudes revive.

We were one evening in Lady Osmond's closet ; every body were at cards, except my Lord Ossory and myself ; I was standing, leaning on Lady Dursley's chair, and observing her play. She called my Lord Ossory to ask him a question ; as he stooped down to speak to her, happening to
move

move my hand, it fell by mere accident on my Lord's : I withdrew it hastily, but he, fixing on me the most passionate look, carried his to his mouth. and kissed that part of it which mine had touched. I was affected by this action, it softened me, it charmed me, and during the remainder of the evening, I could not keep myself from regarding him with a look of embarrassment, which told him too plainly what it endeavoured to conceal.

Pardon me, my Lord, if I am prolix in relating these little particulars : this inhuman passion has been so dear to me, all that relates to it is yet so recent in my memory, that it is impossible for me to speak on the subject without recalling every circumstance, that led me to give myself up to an inclination which has been the source of all my misfortunes

Early in the spring we returned to Hertford, Lord Offory begged to be of our party. I felt an extreme joy at it ; I flattered myself it was on my account only ; I was charmed that he preferred me to those amusements which publick places offered him : alas ! I was but too grateful for so trifling a sacrifice ! Less interrupted than in town, we passed whole hours in those beautiful gardens which Lord Osmond has adorned with every charm of art and nature .

ture. My Lord improved me in the French language and I instructed him in the Spanish: our studies led us to reflexions, of which our sentiments were always the foundation. The secret of our souls seemed every moment ready to escape us; our eyes had already betrayed it, when one day, reading an affecting story of two tender lovers, who had been cruelly torn from each other, the book fell from our hands, our tears began to flow, and seized with I know not what kind of fear, our eyes were fixed ardently on each other. He put one of his arms round me as if to detain me; I leaned towards him, and breaking silence at the same time, we exclaimed both together, Ah! how unhappy were these lovers!

A full confidence followed this accidental discovery of our tenderness. Lord Osfory confessed to me the passion with which he said, I had inspired him the first moment he beheld me. He told me the reasons which he had to resist the warm emotions of his heart, naturally inclined to love. You know he was engaged to Lady Charlotte Chester, when the old marquis of Dorchester offered himself, and was immediately accepted. Lady Charlotte preferred to an amiable lover, who adored her, and for whom she pretended an equal passion.

sion, a title, which she had then no hopes of with him, he having at that time two elder brothers. This ambitious woman disgusted Lord Offory with all the sex, he believed them incapable of tenderness or of fidelity. He left London, and till he came to Hertford, preserved his fear of engaging in another attachment; but this fear was soon lost, in the hope, of finding in me a heart formed for his. He forgot the marchioness, and thought of nothing but of delivering himself up to the love I inspired, which however he had the cruelty to conceal from me.

With what fire did he paint to me, that love! How often did he swear that his happiness, that his life depended on my returning his passion! How melting were his looks! how ardent his expressions! his discourse, the very sound of his voice, penetrated my soul: his words are engraven there in characters never to be effaced.

Ah! my Lord! what a moment! The confession of a passion which one pertakes is like a sudden flash of light, which carries a new day into one's ideas. An unspeakable charm was diffused on every thing around me, every object became more smiling, more amiable in my eyes; all nature seemed more adorned and lovely. That garden, where I had just learned I

was

was beloved, appeared to me the abode of some benevolent being, who had withdrawn the veil which had so long hid my happiness from me.

Seized with astonishment and joy, how could I hide those rapid emotions, emotions to which I had been then a stranger? and why should I have restrained them? I suffered him to see the pleasure his confession had carried into my soul; he enjoyed it, and augmented it by his transports, and by the gratitude with which he received the vows I made, never to cease loving him.

From that instant Lord Offory has engrossed all the tenderness of my soul, and I have only breathed to love him.

'Twas about this time, the Duke of Suffolk came to Hertford: he passed six weeks there, and conceived that passion for me which he yet preserves. Why can I not reward him with a sentiment more tender than esteem? so constant an ardor ought to triumph over the remembrance of an ingrate. My Lord Duke offered me his hand, my refusal afflicted without offending him: he easily imagined that the rank of dutehess, with an immense fortune, offered by a nobleman, whose person was uncommonly agreeable, and whose character was high in the world's esteem,

would not have been refused without a strong attachment for another. He explained himself to Lord Osmond, who assured him of the contrary; but without being able to convince him. I did not doubt but his suspicions fell on my Lord Offory, and I believe it the more, because he never after pronounced his name before me, a piece of respect which I shall always acknowledge as an obligation.

We hid with care our secret correspondence, without any other reason than a little shame for having changed our resolutions: we saw each other continually, and at night wrote to each other what we had not been able to say during the day. How dear is that time even yet to my remembrance! How happy did I live! What good is comparable to the sweetness of loving a man worthy of our most tender affection, who loves us, who tells us so, who repeats it every moment, and whose every wish is lost in ours. What pleasure to expect him, to see him appear, to lift up to him those eyes to which his presence gives new lustre, to read in his, that he thinks us lovely, and that we are so happy as to please him! How flattering to see one's self the object of all his cares, to imagine he feels all the transports he excites,
that

that he enjoys all the pleasures that he gives !

Ah, my Lord, why do the levity, the inconstancy of our hearts, change into bitterness, sentiments so soft and enchanting ! From whence comes it, that of two persons who have equal power of procuring to each other, so true, so exalted a happiness, one should cease to feel it, and deliver up the other to eternal regret ? amiable sensibility ! dear and flattering present ! No, it is not you who render us unhappy : our natural inquietude, our caprices, poison the gifts of Heaven, and we lavish away without possessing, the precious blessings which it bestows upon us.

Six months passed in this agreeable situation : towards the middle of autumn Lord Offory was obliged to return to London, to be present at the marriage of Lord Newport with Lady Mortimer. He shewed an extreme repugnance to leaving us, and quitted me with an unaffected and lively sorrow. He wrote to me two or three times a day ; his letters breathed the soul of tenderness ; he spoke only of the ardent desire he had to return, to see me again, and of the hopes he had of soon being united to me in those soft bonds, he came from seeing tied. My replies expressed the grief his absence gave me ; and which no-

thing was able to dissipate. He returned, and the joy of seeing him again, effaced the remembrance of those tedious hours I had passed without him.

The first transports of this joy being calmed, I fancied I perceived in his looks an unusual melancholy; I asked the reason of it, with that tender interest which a heart truly enamoured cannot but take, in the least inquietude of the beloved object. One day as I pressed him to trust me with his sorrows, I saw his eyes wet with tears: he endeavoured to hide them from me, and turning away his face, Ah! said he to me, with a voice broken and interrupted, I have a reproach to make myself, a reproach which your goodness renders every instant more lively! Do not insist on my explaining the reason of it; if I speak, you will love me less, you will perhaps no longer love me at all: I am not worthy of the heart you have given me; no man is worthy of it: How much is your soul above mine? How ought I to blush before you! Ah! Lady Catesby! Is this your lover! Is this the man beloved by you, who has prepared for himself eternal remorse?---No, I am no more that happy lover who once hoped to deserve you. This strange discourse pierced my heart with sorrow: I begged him to open his whole

whole soul to me; he refused; I did not dare to press him for fear of adding to his affliction: Time seemed to soften it, and my curiosity subsided. His love was always the same, and his grief dissipating by little and little, I was not obstinate to discover his secret. Lord Offory was so dear to me, I found such sweetness in sacrificing every thing to him! How could I renew a subject of conversation which might displease or afflict him?

We were to leave Hertford in a week; Lord Offory had prevailed on me to consent to give him my hand a month after our return to London: I wished however, to have waited my brother's return; whose last letter had assured me he intended to cross the seas in the beginning of winter. Lord Offory might have expected a better match than I was at that time: however, my fortune was sufficient to bear the additional expence which a wife would occasion: it put me in a condition to refuse the advantageous settlements he would have made: A plan of the marriage articles was sent to him; he took pleasure in examining them, in settling them with me: we were agreed on all points, when one evening a messenger enquired for my Lord Offory with an appearance of great mystery, and would deliver his packet into
no

no hands but his own. He was at play, and left it to speak to this man, but instead of coming back, he sent to beg Lord Arthur would take his cards. At supper time one of his servants came to tell us he found himself a little indisposed, and was gone to bed.

Never did my heart feel any inquietude equal to what seized it at this message. I did not imagine my Lord was ill, but I was convinced he had received some ill news. I sent Betty several times to enquire after his health, and to find out how he was employed; she brought me word at first, that he was shut up in his apartment, and had commanded his servants not to enter. At length she learnt of his valet de chambre, that he wept bitterly, seemed in despair, and that he had never seen him in so shocking a state of mind.

What a night did I pass! My Lord Ossory was in the deepest affliction; he shut himself up: he wept; he had sorrows, and he did not seek me. Had he then grief he feared to trust me with! Did he doubt the interest I took in whatever concerned him? He had then secrets to me. I recalled to mind his discourse, and his embarrassment the day he returned to Hertford; I began to fear, without knowing what I feared. The idea only that he was in tears, made
mine

mine flow ; I was not able to calm my troubled heart ; and the morning surprised me in that painful suspense, which one is always eager to get rid of, but of which one often has occasion to lament the loss.

As soon as the hour allowed, I sent to know how my Lord did: they returned answer, that he was not in bed, that he was dressed, and had sat down to write. My Lord Arthur, his Lady, and son, were the only strangers remaining at Hertford : they left us that very day. To avoid appearing, I ordered them to say I was asleep, and went to walk by the side of the canal : I wandered a long time without perceiving the path that I had taken : as I was returning, I saw Lord Ossory, who advanced towards me, but so feeble, so dejected, so changed, that it was easy to judge in beholding him, that some fatal, some unforeseen event, must have reduced him to that state. He joined me, bowed, without lifting up his eyes, took one of my hands, which he gently pressed between his, and led me to an arbor where we both seated ourselves, without speaking a word. I had not courage to ask him any questions; he attempted to speak, but his voice expired upon his lips : at last, falling at my knees, and hiding his face in my robe, he wept aloud, with all the marks of inexpressible

pressible affliction. His tears, and his melancholy silence, stabbed me to the heart; I pressed him tenderly to speak; I wept with him, his sorrow overwhelmed me; I conjured him to moderate it; to lodge it in my bosom: he seemed to yield to my intreaties, and raised his head. His eyes, bathed in tears, were fixed on mine; our tears were mingled; he appeared determined to explain himself; I again pressed him to it, when starting suddenly from me, he left me with the most precipitate haste. I called to him, but in vain; I would have followed him, but had not strength. All my fears, my alarms, were for him alone; I could not conceive what could afflict him to that excess, nor how it was possible he should find such difficulty in opening his soul to me. Going back to my apartment, they told me my Lord Offory was gone; two hours after, they brought me a letter; it was from him: could I have imagined I should find there the following words!

“ I leave you madam, and I leave you without the remotest hope ever to behold you again. How should I dare again to appear before you? I, who have betrayed you? Who, when arrived at the summit of my most ardent wishes, when beloved by you, have not been able to repress an unworthy

unworthy inclination? Who have exposed myself to the loss of so precious a blessing—Ah! madam! detest, despise this monster, who has destroyed your happiness, and his own. So near being united to you! so charmed with my fate! so proud to reign in a heart like yours! When you had given me the preference—Must I then!—Yes, the laws of honour command—How are you revenged! How am I punished!—I lose you!—Just God! I lose you! Yet of whom can I complain but of myself?—so dear as you were to my heart, so present to my remembrance, ought not your idea to have checked me? But was I then myself?—Alas! I shall see you no more; I shall be the object of your contempt, of your aversion—More unhappy still, a thousand times more unhappy if I am so, one moment, of your regret, of those tears which I have seen flow for an ingrate, for an inhuman wretch, forced to deprive himself for ever—Ah! pity me, madam! I dare yet implore your compassion—Why can I not at least confess to you—But this horrible secret is not mine only—I ought to respect—Who?—The author of my misery---Is it then possible I am reduced to wish to be forgot by you?---Yet I cannot forget you! I shall always adore you; your image will be always present to me. A-

dieu!

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dieu ! madam ! adieu ! May I not live long enough to hear what you think of an unhappy man who could never have deserved you !”

I remained like one inanimate : a blow so terrible, so little expected, so little deserved, almost annihilated my very being. Immoveable, and without raising my eyes from that fatal paper, it seemed to me in finishing it, that some invisible hand precipitated me into an abyss, and destroyed in me every principle of life. I remained till the next morning in a kind of stupidity which suspended all the faculties of my soul. Too blest if that state had lasted, and if my reason had been lost with my happiness !

Lady Osmond was twelve miles off, with one of her relations : she received there the news of the duel and death of my brother. When she returned, she consulted with her Lord the means of preparing me to bear this loss ; being no stranger to the tender sensibility of my soul. They told her the way I was in ; she asked if I had had letters from London, and finding I had received several, she concluded I was already informed of the fate of my brother. My faintings succeeded each other so rapidly, I was so incapable of listening to her, or of speaking, that my
situation

situation terrified her, it was not till the next evening, when I was come a little to myself, that I discovered by the consolation she endeavoured to give me, and by the details into which it led her, that my amiable brother was no more. I owed my life to this increase of affliction ; my tears now opened themselves a passage : their abundance brought back to me the cruel power to reflect how wretched I was : it was with difficulty I hid one part of my sorrows, whilst I gave myself up without constraint, to those for which I had no reason to blush.

I could not bring myself to return to London ; I staid at Hertford, in spite of the entreaties of Lord and Lady Osmond, who loved me tenderly. I carried my mourning for my brother the same lengths I had done that for my Lord Catesby : I would see nobody : I found no pleasure but in abandoning myself to grief : I ran eagerly to every place where I had seen, where I had conversed with Lord Ossory ; my cries, my groans pointed out those places where he had assured me of his love, of that love which no longer existed : I bathed with my tears his letters, his picture, a thousand trifles, that he had given me. Engrossed continually by his idea, I yet felt only the pain of being separated,

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for

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for ever separated, from him : I regretted, without condemning him : I read every moment that fatal letter ; I sought in vain to comprehend what he had wrote, and why he should abandon me : I pitied him, because he desired to be pitied : I neither believed him false nor perfidious : my heart always defended, always adored him. I had loved him without knowing whether he shared my tenderness ; and I loved him still, uncertain of the cause of his flight, without doubting the nobleness of his sentiments, and could not persuade myself he had deceived me.

I passed part of the day in writing to him, without ever sending what I wrote : as soon as my letter was finished, an invincible repugnance prevented my sealing it : I read it over, I wept, I tore to pieces what I had been writing : an instant after, I began another, without being able to determine what step I should take. My head fatigued by a continual application to the same subject, by all the dark projects which sorrow gives birth to, lost by degrees the faculty of fixing on other objects. I thought no more of any thing but my brother and Lord Offory. Sometimes I fell into a sort of insensibility ; every idea was then effaced from my mind : I returned to myself, only to feel my wretchedness
with

with more force. I invoked the soul of my brother; I called him to the succour of his unhappy sister: I begged of Heaven to take away my life; and I know not how my reason preserved itself in a state so near approaching to madness.

I expected my letters with impatience: I did not suppose I should receive one from Lord Ossory; yet when I found none from him, amongst those they brought me, I felt the desire I had to see them vanish. I ran over Lady Osmond's, trembling, I feared to find there a name which yet I sought for with eagerness. Alas! it was there only to augment my sorrows: I learned that he was dangerously ill: I forgot every thing to think only of his present state. I wrote to one of my servants who was in London, to inform himself exactly of the course of my Lord Ossory's distemper, and to send me every day an express with the account. His illness was long, and whilst it lasted I experienced that grief may be suspended by the fear of still greater affliction. But what a change did his recovery make in my situation! The first use my Lord Ossory made of his return to health, was to go to St. Jame's church, where he was married to Miss Fanny Montford. None of his friends were present at the ceremony; it was celebrated

without pomp; and two hours after he set out, with his bride, for the north of England.

How shall I picture to you, my lord, the impression this news made on me? It seemed that all I loved was a second time torn from me: I had preserved, without perceiving it, a feeble hope; the instant that deprived me of it, opened again all my wounds: I knew Lord Ossory was no longer mine; I repeated every moment of the day that he never could be: but I had no Idea of the pang which rent my heart, when I told myself he was another's.

His marriage explained to me neither his letter nor his conduct; why should honour engage him to espouse this lady, whom he then knew not, or knew but slightly? and how could honour impose on him a law for her, which was not more binding in regard to me? I lost myself in my reflections; and whilst I sunk under the weight of my chagrins, whilst a melancholy languor destroyed my health, faded my youth and robbed me of repose, Lord Ossory was content and tranquil: his wishes were fulfilled. I painted him to my imagination lost in the transports of a satisfied passion, as a lover who secludes himself from the world, to possess, without interruption, the object of his tenderness:

I re-

I represented him to myself in the arms of his happy bride, forgetting me in the bosom of pleasures, banishing from his mind those weak remembrances of me, which might perhaps sometimes intrude upon his heart; but which a smile from her he loved, would efface. His taste, his inclination only could have determined him to this union; Miss Montford was of birth, but without fortune; and those who had seen her, assured me she was not handsome. I am ignorant by what charm she attracted him.

I will not attempt to express to you the torments of my heart: to judge of the cruel emotions by which I was agitated, it is necessary to have been in the same situation, and to have had the same degree of sensibility. Believe me, my lord, those who have never felt the misery of being betrayed by those they loved, by those they loved with passion, can have but a faint idea of the sorrows which it is possible to experience in this life. The loss of a splendid fortune leaves us at least the advantage of shewing the greatness of our souls, either by that moderation which enables us calmly to bear this reverse, or by that noble firmness which raises us above fortune itself. That excess of vanity which reigns in the human heart, is often a powerful

consolation under the greatest misfortunes. Happy those who can enjoy the secret pleasure of self-admiration! But what resource remains to her, who having fixed all her hopes of happiness on one only object, sees herself suddenly deprived of that object; and forced to accuse by her tears the very hand she would have chosen to wipe them off, had they flowed from any other cause? To be unhappy, and to be so made by those one loves, is a species of misery, not to be comprehended, but by such as have had the sad experience.

Lord Campley returned from Venice at the end of winter. Lady Henrietta obtained his permission to come down to Hertford; the pleasure of seeing her again, her softness, her friendship, the confession I made her of all my weaknesses, gave a little ease to my heart. This amiable friend restored me insensibly to myself: I still felt my sorrows, but I became capable of concealing them, and of appearing once more in the world. Assured that my Lord Ossory was no longer in London, and that he had no intention of coming thither, I resolved to return: I abandoned that place where every object that presented itself to my eyes, nourished my affliction, and renewed my regrets.

You

You scarce knew me again ; my condition moved your tender compassion. My features however, recovered their form, which they had lost by my extreme leanness : time restored my bloom, but it could not restore either my gaiety or my repose. I made a thousand efforts to forget a perfidious traitor ; sometimes I believed I loved no longer, but I always remembered I had loved. My Lord Offory yet excited violent emotions in my soul ; his distance scarce secured me against him, I carried an air of timidity into every place where it was possible I might meet him ; every moment I fancied I saw him, that I heard his voice. My Lord Penshurst, by a slight resemblance of him, caused an emotion which you yourself perceived. His very name was sufficient to make me tremble. I combated the remains of this weakness ; I fancied I was near triumphing over it, when his return revived in my heart all those sentiments, which time and his levity ought to have extinguished. Never was astonishment equal to mine, when I saw him enter at Lady Belvile's ; his eyes instantly fixed themselves on me : I felt an agitation which made me afraid to stay, lest I should betray myself. Whilst all the company, charmed to see him, ran eagerly to embrace him, and mixed with
their

their compliments of condolance on the death of his wife, a thousand felicitations on his return, Lady Henrietta had the goodness to lead me out of the room: we went away together. You was a witness of my confusion; I in vain endeavoured to hide it: the strange perturbation of my senses discovered to you part of my secret. Lord Ossory was every day at my door; he found it shut to him alone: he interested one of my women, whom he knew, in his favour; and prevailed on her to beg for him one moment's conversation with me. He wrote to me, he followed me every where; his obstinacy alarmed me; I felt that Lord Ossory could never be to me an indifferent person. Ashamed to find still this sensibility, I thought it my duty to fly from the danger of seeing him, of listening to him: do you now my lord, think you ought to accuse me of cruelty, of inflexibility, for having refused to receive Lord Ossory's visits, for sending back his letters without deigning to open them, for not desiring any explanation with him? What regard do I owe him? What motive should engage me to hear him? Ah! What can he have to say to me after having so long forgot me! He has too well informed me that he is able to live without me, to be happy without me! Ah! that
he

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he had been always so! Yes, that he had been always so, but far removed from me! If you know where he is, if you write to him, beg him to renounce the project of appeasing me, of seeing me. Me, his friend? Ah! God! I cannot be so.

I am sorry Heaven has snatched from him her whom he loved, whom he preferred to me: but why should his loss be a reason for reproaching me? Is it for me to console him? Adieu, my lord! keep my secret: do justice to my sentiments; and if you wish I should believe the tender friendship you profess for me sincere, speak to me no more of Lord Ossory.

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LETTER XV.

Wednesday, Winchester

I Was not able to write to you yesterday. I was fatigued, I was even ill: I kept my chamber. This light indisposition gave great pleasure to Sir Harry; he would stay with me; I knew not what to say to him; I desired him to sing, he has a clear, melodious, agreeable voice. Indeed, my dear Henrietta, it recalled to my memory those soft seducing sounds—And must I always think of him?—Won't you chide me?

me ? I abuse your complaisance ; I say the same things incessantly ; nothing can dissipate those ideas ; I surprise myself sometimes in a humour for which I make myself a thousand reproaches. 'Tis said that solitude inclines us to misanthropy ; I should imagine the great world infinitely more proper to produce that effect, if the natural indulgence of a good heart did not temper the bitterness of those reflections which the understanding cannot help making. In observing the inconsistencies, the absurdities and insignificance of so many persons amongst whom one must live ; those who think themselves exempt from such follies, ought to regard themselves in the midst of these extravagancies, as a healthy person environed with crowds of the sick. It would be unjust to bear them ill-will for not enjoying as flourishing a state of health as ourselves.

Last night every body assembled in my apartment : they rallied my Lord Clarendon on a passion which he has a long time preserved, though the object of his attachment little deserved such constancy. This passion has rendered him very unhappy during the last five years. What think you of this subject of pleasantry ? Could you suppose, any one would find amusement in recalling to another's remembrance

brance, the most painful moments of his life? Ah! what a manner of thinking must they have who can find pleasure in tearing open the wounds of a tender heart! My Lord Clarendon attended with complaisance to this cruel raillery: he shewed both sense and good nature by the manner in which he bore it: but he cast down his eyes, he was embarrassed—Tell me, my dear, why we blush to have been deceived? We are then ashamed to have sincerity, and to suppose it in others. From whence comes it, that one feels humbled by being discovered to have credulity, of which, if one examined the first principles, one ought rather to be proud? If it is by our own sentiments we judge those of others, distrust is not natural to a virtuous soul: Ah! can those possibly suspect deceit, who feel themselves incapable of practising it!

I partook the pains of this poor nobleman: perhaps my concern proceeded less from a generous compassion, than from a lively retrospect to my own misfortunes: I will not however examine too narrowly, into the cause. I hate to seek for reasons to weaken the idea I have of goodness: those moralists, who setting up for scrutinizers and judges of the soul, to vilify it, degrade its most exalted operations, only
furnish

furnish me with conviction against themselves. Now we are on this subject, I thank you for the little book you have sent me. The author writes well, but does he think well? I would have people impelled to write, by a more disinterested motive than that of displaying their wit. The Spectator ought to be a model for those who study to penetrate the secrets of the human heart. Why employ those efforts to afflict us, which might as easily tender to us consolation? would it not be better to elevate the soul than to abase it? It is from examples of goodness, of greatness, of generosity, that men aspire to be good, great, generous. Those who would render their knowledge useful, ought to assist us to profit of those seeds of rectitude which nature has sown in our hearts. To rob us of the merit of owing to our efforts part of our good qualities, to attribute every laudable action to vanity or self-love, is to discourage us in the race of virtue. To talk to us only of our weaknesses, is like reminding an unhappy person, every moment, how much he is to be pitied: if we are unable to console him, ah! why thus inform him that he is miserable? To an evil which is incurable, lenitives alone—But, good God! is it for me to reason, to criticise the polite Sir James Williams? See the

the danger of reading ; I have almost wrote a book too. Adieu ! I love you with all my heart.



LETTER XVI.

Thursday, Winchester.

WHAT a ridiculous, what an impertinent, what a vexatious adventure have I met with ! Happily disengaged from Sir Harry, who is twelve miles from hence, I intended to take advantage of his absence, to enjoy the pleasure of walking alone. As I crossed the walk I was in, to gain the park, I saw Sir James : he had followed me without letting me perceive it. This meeting extremely displeased me ; I knew it was then impossible to avoid hearing him : determined to listen to him I had already meditated on my reply—But, my dear Henrietta, could you believe it ? Could you imagine the effect his discourse has produced in my heart, my weak unguarded heart. Sir James began by telling me “that the only motive of his journey to Winchester, was”—he hesitated—“to find—to seize—the opportunity—which chance had now given him”—in short—“to render me a homage”—he again hesitated ;

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but emboldened by my profound silence, he drew the most lively, the most animated picture of his ardour, of his sufferings, of his respect, of his passion—My God, of whatever he pleased, my dear, I gave him no interruption—Alas! I was too distant from him!—His confusion, his embarrassment, his expressions almost the same, the place, the hour, the season, the very day, so present to my memory; all recalled the idea of Lord Ossory. I seemed again to hear that voice so sweet, so adored, those flattering promises, those vows so cruelly betrayed: my head sunk on my bosom, forgetting Sir James, his confession, his love; forgetting prudence and myself. I gave a loose to my tears; abandoned myself to a sorrow, the marks of which I was unable either to restrain or to conceal. I know not what Sir James said, I know not what he thought of an emotion so extraordinary: I am ignorant how long this singular scene lasted. We heard Lady Sunderland, she came towards us: Sir James struck into the wood, and your foolish friend crossed into a close walk, that she might not be seen, and hastened to write to you.—Surely I have lost my reason—What can Sir James think?—I must see him again in an instant—that thought is insupportable.

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LETTER XVII.

Thursday, Midnight.

SIR James did not appear at dinner: he complained of the head-ach, and came down very late. He seemed melancholy, and I was embarrassed. I cannot express to you how much I fear an explanation. I will avoid it, if I can. Must Lord Ossory then be always present to me; can nothing efface the remembrance of that ingrate? Must he afflict me without ceasing! What an idea must Sir James entertain of a woman, who weeps because an amiable man loves her tenderly! A man whose birth is equal to her's, whose fortune is very considerable—Oh, my dear Henrietta, I have a heart incomprehensible, feeble, and, I think, contemptible. Those qualities, those virtues, which were the basis of our friendship, you alone possess; for me, I have no more than the appearance of them. A cruel passion, a constancy ill placed, have destroyed my natural disposition, and changed my character. I still retain the same principles, but I swerve from them: I act contrary to the clearest lights. I cannot rise above this vile half of myself, this feeble machine, to which the least impulse

brings back the impression of its first tender emotions. Chide me harshly ; I entreat you : I stand in need of your utmost severity.

But by what ill fate must Sir James and Sir Harry persecute me ? I can love nothing, I would not be beloved. The one is silent, pursues me every where, and is angry : the other speaks in a tone of voice, and with expressions that—Have men but one language ?—Why has his made me call to remembrance ?—Am I so much to blame, my dear ? tell me—You are so kind to my faults, that my friendship for you forces me to reproach them doubly. If you find me ridiculous, yet do not love me less.



L E T T E R XVIII.

Friday, Winchester.

YOU are afraid your letters are long, that they tire me : You, my dear Henrietta, to think you can tire me ! Be assured that absent from you, my only amusement is to read those amiable letters. The sentiment which makes them dear to me, will never produce sorrow in my soul ; my tears will never efface those beloved characters : I shall never remember with
 shame

shame the pleasure I feel in reading them—Alas ! who could have foretold me that those, from whence I once received so pure a joy, I should now not dare—When I received them, I was happy, so happy, that all those blessings, which others esteem, seemed to me nothing, to those I hoped to possess—What a change did a day, an hour, a moment, make in my fate !—That letter that fatal inexplicable letter—The perfidious, to swear to me that he adored me, to explore my pity !—Ah ! my dear, I cannot forget him—No, I cannot ! What I have wrote to Lord Castle-Cary has given new life to that sincere, that ardent, tenderness, which nothing can ever destroy. I have struggled against the shame of yielding to the extreme weakness of my heart. My pride has supported me in this painful effort. I believed I might depend on my reason ; I flattered myself—Vain hope ! I can never cease to think of Lord Ossory. His absence makes me wretched : from whence comes this ? Do I then think he ought to be sensible of mine ? Can I suppose my disdain has not disengaged him ? Was it to be followed that I fled ? Have I the meanness to desire it ?—Alas ! I know not ; but I did imagine he would have seen Lord Castle-Cary, that he would have endeavoured to see you—I am become fan-

tastical, unjust, when he is mentioned to me, I am angry, when he is not, I am afflicted. In desiring to see me, he irritates me: he desists; his neglect displeases, it offends me. My God! is this your friend, is this a woman of sense, who is so inconsistent with herself? My good, my tender friend, love me for us both, for I sincerely hate myself.



L E T T E R XIX.

Saturday, Winchester.

SIR James has wrote to me. His letter is tender; he loves me, he will not tell me so. He does not dare to ask the subject of my tears; he shall never forget that moment. He sees that my heart is pierced with grief which he respects. He concludes with assuring me of his eternal love.—Eternal, my dear, they all promise an eternal love. The first proof Sir James will give me of this eternal love, and of his submission, is, to hide those sentiments, which he is sure of preserving for ever. I have answered him politely, and accepted his silence only. I am sorry to have inspired him with tenderness. If I cannot make him happy, I wish at least, not to have

have made him miserable. He is amiable ; he would have been agreeable to me, if any one could be so.

You are sure Lord Offory is not at Bath. They have not seen him at Hertford. Lady Osmond does not name him amongst those who are with her. She presses me to return to Hertford ! to see again those scenes ! Ah ! I will not go to Hertford.

Here is Sir Henry quickly returned, and returned the very same as when he left us. I received him very well ; not well enough however, for he has a very discontented air—" Your ladyship is writing"—a profound sigh, and the tiresome creature walks off—Ah no, he comes back, loaded with a basket of hyacinths and narcissusses, with which he is going to ornament my closet. Whilst he is busy arranging them—My ladyship is writing—to the great regret of Sir Harry. I feel that nothing can be more impolite ; but if I was to shew the least gratitude for his little civilities, he would overwhelm me with them. 'Tis quite enough to bear all his ill humours in silence : he has so many with me, that I often examine myself to find if I have not done him some injury. That which makes his presence tedious, and his tenderness painful to me, is my thinking that in his heart he
calls

calls me ungrateful. In effect, why treat him ill? What have I to reproach him with? An embarrassment? A desire to be with me, which leads him to follow my steps, perhaps in spite of himself? An extreme submission! A passion to please me, which he scarce dares to let me see!—If you saw with what application he is employed in his work—poor Sir Harry—they say one is unjust when one loves: one is much more so when one does not. What right have I to be impolite to Sir Harry? Because he wearies me, must I afflict him? Ought I to abuse the power which his weakness gives me over him? Do we owe nothing to those we make suffer? I will go talk to him—But what shall I say?—I will ask him for snuff, what o'clock it is, what kind of weather; let fall my handkerchief to give him the pleasure of taking it up. One must be obliging.

Lord Castle-Cary begs my pardon: he finds I was in the right: but he cannot conceive what can have made such a change in Lord Offory's character: he should not have known him again by his strange conduct in regard to me, Adieu! my dear and tender friend.

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L E T T E R X X.

Sunday, Winchester.

A H ! Great God ! What emotion !
 What surprise ! Under a cover in an
 unknown hand, a letter from Lord Offory
 —Yes, from him—It is his hand—My
 God ! It is from him !—From whence
 comes it ?—Who brought it ?—How !—
 Wherefore !—He write to me again !—To
 me ?—What would he with me ?—My
 hand trembles—My pen drops from my
 fingers—I must take breath.

They cannot tell me from whence this
 letter comes. A man on horseback gave it
 to one of my servants, whom he enquired
 for—Can Lord Offory be in this country ?
 —Behold me like a fool ; like one distract-
 ed—Like—But to what can I be com-
 pared but to myself—I cannot write—My
 head is disordered—O, my dear, if you
 could see me—That letter—It distracts
 me.

Alas ! What is become of that happy
 time, when the sight of that writing
 would have melted my heart with softness ?
 At present, it terrifies me—It gives me
 disorder inexpressible—O, my dear Henri-
 etta ! Why am I not with you ? Why can-
 not

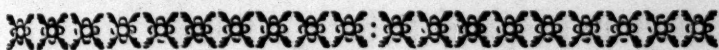
not I repose in your bosom, the pangs I feel! They are so exquisite, they are of such a kind—I cannot describe them; but I sink under them.

What power has this man over me? I once believed he had that of making me happy: he has lost that, he has lost it voluntarily—Must he then still retain the cruel power of afflicting me?—I wish to hide myself, to forget myself, to lose my very being—This letter—I know not what to do. How unhappy am I! When time seemed to have weakned my tender sentiments, and diminished my chagrin, this ingrate returns to town, his caprice excites him to see me; and when, to avoid him, I leave all who are most dear to me, he torments me even here; he writes to me: he has the cruelty to write to me.

This cover! This artifice—When I send back the letter to London, how shall I convince him I have not read it?—He is not himself sincere enough to believe me on my word—So artful—But what can he write to me?—Dare he attempt to justify himself? how can he?—Ah! It is neither love nor friendship which prompts him to importune me; it is vanity. He cannot bear to see himself scorned: he writes to triumph over my resolutions; to prevail over my pride,—over my resentment—After

L E T T E R X X I. 83

ter two years of forgetfulness, dare he flatter himself, that I yet think of him?—Is this weakness or curiosity?—Whence comes this desire of seeing me?—Yet what have I to fear?—Has he any reproaches to make me?—I will read his letter; I will answer it—But see—Lady Southampton!—Alas! Why have not I a soul like hers! Adieu!



L E T T E R X X I.

Sunday Night.

HE complains of me, my dear Henrietta! He has the presumption to complain, to teach me lessons of generosity? The husband of Fanny Montford is astonished at my inconstancy! He expected from me other sentiments---And all this with a haughtiness---Read, read, I entreat you, the copy of his insolent letter---This unfaithful man has not the least idea of the sorrows he has inflicted on me---But is it possible for a man to comprehend the miseries which he may cause?

To Lady C A T E S B Y.

To fly an unhappy man, to reject his submissions, to abandon him to his remorse,

more, to despise his repentance, to reflect without pity on what he deserves to suffer ; is the behaviour of a woman devoid of all sentiment, who thinking herself injured, gives herself up to all the fury of resentment, and from whom indeed, one has no right to expect more softness or complacency.

But to open her heart to the generous emotions of pity, to compassionate the fate of him, who is the more to be lamented, because he has merited those miseries under which he groans ; to forget, to pardon, to remit to him as a friend, part of his offences as a lover : to grant some indulgence to the penitence of a criminal ; to hear him, at least, is what I expected from the noble, the enlightened soul of Lady Catesby.

But she is changed ; she is no longer that faithful friend, that tender mistress, whose love nothing could weaken. Her letters, the only consolation of my exile, the only balm of my afflicted soul : those letters, so dear, so often pressed fondly to my lips, so often bathed with my tears, those charming letters, all that now remains of my past happiness, they still tell me you have loved me ; but your eyes have contradicted their pleasing assurances, and your departure has too well confirmed my

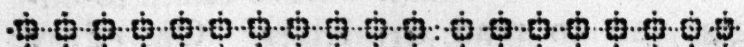
my misfortune, and convinced me of your hatred.

Ah! Lady Catesby! Lady Catesby! Is it then you, who treat me with this inhuman cruelty? You who have a thousand times promised me your eternal esteem? How are you certain you are not unjust? You have received wrongs, I confess; but you are still ignorant of which kind they are: Till now, I have not been at liberty to explain my conduct: condescend only to hear me, madam: in the name of all that is dear to you, do not refuse this concession to a man who adores you, who has never ceased to love, to admire, to regret you. In spite of the strongest appearances, believe me, he is not unworthy the favour he now presumes to ask.

Pardon the manner I have taken to engage you to read my letter. One of my servants waits your reply at the farm.

“That inhuman cruelty! How do you know you are not unjust?” Could you have imagined he would have dared to doubt, whether I have acted justly in regard to him? “Those letters bathed with his tears”—From whence are those tears? From what cause—Ah! Let them still flow! Let him weep! He has betrayed that tender Mistress, who preferred him

to all mankind, who lived for no other purpose than to love him ; whose ardent vows to heaven had only for their object the happiness of this cruel—Ah ! Let him weep—How ought he to reproach himself?—That Faithful Friend may abandon him without being inhuman or unjust—Insolent supplicator ! “ He does not believe himself unworthy the favour he asks ”—Examine well the style of his letter—Shall I reply to it ?—I know not—What can I say to him ?—But I feel myself disordered—I cannot go on—My dear, my amiable friend, why did I leave you, and at a time when I had such need of your counsels ? My Lord Offory was the cause—Alas ! Have I ever known an affliction of which he was not the source ?



L E T T E R XXII.

Monday, Winchester.

I AM yet in suspense what I ought to do: the oftener I read Lord Offory's letter, the more am I enraged against him. Because I am capable of a just resentment, my soul is no longer the same, he once knew it : a mean condescension would, in
his

his opinion, become me better than what he is pleased to call, an inhuman cruelty.

O, my dear Henrietta, these men regard us merely as beings placed in the universe for their amusement ; to trifle with, in that species of infancy, to which they are reduced by those impetuous passions, which they reserve to themselves the infamous liberty of avowing with confidence, and submitting to without shame. They have left to that sex they presume to despise as weak and irresolute, the difficult task of resisting the softer impulses of the heart, of conquering nature herself. Slaves to their senses alone, when they appear to be so to our charms ; it is for themselves they pursue, for themselves they address us : they consider only the pleasure we are capable of bestowing : they withhold their esteem from the object of their pretended adorations ; and if they find in us strength of mind, and dignity of sentiments, we are inhuman creatures : we pass the limits their tyranny has prescribed to us, and become unjust without knowing it.

I am piqued—I will answer him—I will wait however till the bitterness which I cannot hide, is a little moderated—I will not see him—I will never see him—I will endeavour not to write with severity, that I may remit to Lord Ossory, who ought to

be indifferent to me, part of the offences of a lover, whom it is my duty to hate—No, there is not an expression in his letter which does not wound my very soul—I know not of what kind are those wrongs—How can he say this? Has he not betrayed me, quitted, abandoned me—Has he not destroyed my dearest hopes? Has he not deprived me—Alas! of himself, of the only object of my tender attachment! Has he not done me all the injury that was in his power? And is it possible I can pardon him? Why had I not resolution to tear his letter the moment I saw the hand? Why, must he—This ungrateful man has made it his whole happiness to trouble, to destroy mine.



L E T T E R. XXIII.

Monday, past Midnight.

WOULD you believe it, my dear Henrietta, I cannot write to Lord Ossory? I have twenty times begun a very short letter, without being able to finish it. Every thing which I would wish not to say, offers itself readily to my mind, reproaches flow spontaneously from my pen: I study to seem indifferent, and my
sensi-

sensibility breaks out in spite of me : no expression, either of coldness or moderation, pleases me : my heart carried away by a rapid emotion, pants to explain itself without disguise. I must wait a little.

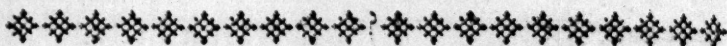
Two o'Clock.

I shall never be able to write this answer : I write, I erase : after all, why do I torment myself ? Is it necessary I should write to him ? Perhaps it is, for he may interpret my silence a consent to see him — If he should come hither — So near as he may be — He has no estate in this country — Is it chance, or the desire to find me which brings him ? Do not, my dear, ridicule my anxiety ; do not say I love him — Alas ! how is it possible I can still love him ? It is not love which thus takes up all my thoughts — It is — I know not what it is ; but I am most unhappy. I am retiring to bed ; but without hope of finding rest. Pity your tenderest friend, pity her, without examining too deeply into the cause of her sorrows : we have often agreed in pronouncing it cruelty, to refuse compassion to those miseries, which may to us appear light and trifling : it is not the species of suffering, but the

H 3

sensi-

sensibility of the sufferer, which ought to excite our pity : alas ! I am then very worthy of yours.



L E T T E R XXIV.

Tuesday, Winchester.

I Inclose a copy of my answer. I never knew before the difficulty of writing, when one wishes to use a language foreign to the heart : it is an oppressive burthen, from which I am at last relieved. Could you believe, that during the hour which has passed since my letter was dispatched, I have twenty times wished it were possible to recal it ? I am afraid it is too disobliging——That it may afflict him. I have read his again with attention : it appears to me in a new light : those very expressions that excited my anger, now move my tenderest compassion : how affecting is that passage where he speaks of my letters ! “ He pressed them to his lips, they were his only consolation ”——But what were then his sorrows ? His exile !——If he had loved me——Ah ! how could he have wedded another, if his heart——I can comprehend nothing——He says he is unhappy——I would not think he is indeed so——

Alas !

Alas! If he had suffered as I have done---
had tasted that bitter cup, had felt such
unutterable anguish---how should I pity
him! How easily would my pride yield to
the sweetness of consoling him, of restoring
joy to his soul! My tears begin to flow;
they will not be restrained, I cannot sup-
port the idea of his grief, of those never-
ceasing sorrows of which he speaks. Tho'
reflection ought to convince me they have
never in reality existed, they present them-
selves every moment to my imagination;
and though reason rejects the pleasing delu-
sion, my heart too easily gives it admit-
tance.

To Lord OSSORY.

I neither expected your complaints, my
lord, nor the request which accompanies
them: the time in which an explanation
of your conduct was interesting to me, has
long been past: if it sometimes finds a
place in my thoughts, it is like the re-
membrance of a painful dream, which the
morning dissipates, and of which one only
retains a melancholy and confused idea. It
is of little consequence to me to know the
motives which engaged you to restore me
to reason and myself; it is sufficient for
me, that you did so. I do not think I de-
part

part at all from my character, in refusing to see you, in refusing in the most determined manner. I can never regard you as a friend, to whom I am obliged to remit such offences as are neither pardonable in a friend nor a lover. Ought he who could abandon me so long to the uncertain conjectures of my own tortured mind, to the suspicions which I could not but entertain of his tenderness, and his probity, to be astonished at my indifference? has he a right to reproach me? Why should I seek to know the circumstances of my wrongs, when I cannot doubt of the facts? I know enough to make me perfectly careless as to those particulars, I may yet be ignorant of: I expect from the complaisance I have forced myself to show in writing to you, a favour which I have a right to demand. Give me back my lord, those letters, the style of which recalls to your memory, those sentiments which I blush ever to have felt, and do not complain of a heart which has been noble enough, never to complain of yours.

Don't you find, my dear Henrietta, a species of falshood in this manner of writing? It is indeed, what I ought to think, but it is not what I do think. That haughty indifference is not in my heart; I am sorry I have sent this letter——Why should

should I dissemble ? Would it not have been better to have spoke sincerely, to have confessed the real situation of my soul in regard to him ? To have said, I perhaps love you still, but I no longer esteem you : I renounce you ; the constancy of my sentiments is no proof that I believe you worthy of my attachment : it is in my natural character ; the indelible features of which have engraven on my soul a weakness, which once was dear to me, and of which I still love the remembrance : it does not depend on you, but on the lively impressions which my heart has received. Like one who beholds his own image with complacency ; and takes delight in contemplating the object, without thinking of the glass which presents it to view, so I please myself with recalling the idea of my love, without thinking with the least degree of pleasure of my unworthy lover. '

This had been more noble, more open and generous, I wish I had done it. I hate dissimulation, I hate even the appearance of it. But the letter is gone—I have long lost the habit of being pleased with myself ; regret seems attached to every step I take. Of all those good qualities, I once fancied myself mistress of, there only remains the knowledge of my faults : and of all those blessings I once promised myself,

self, your friendship is the only true and real one I possess.



L E T T E R XXV.

Wednesday, Winchester.

Certainly, my dear, my head is a little disordered. I am unquiet, agitated : I count the hours, the moments ; time seems to me uncommonly long. I expect, without knowing what I expect. The least noise sets me a trembling ; if my door opens, my heart beats. Every time my servants pass in or out of my apartment, I look at them with eyes which seem to require something of them : I hear a tedious repetition of, What would my lady have—Ah ! Good God ! Your lady knows not what she would have—Can you divine, my dearest Henrietta, the cause of all this emotion ? O how low, how mean, how shameful is it !—It is the expectation of an answer—No, I cannot suffer myself to betray such weakness.

I wish to leave this place, to fly from so dangerous a neighbourhood : yet if Lord Ossory is determined to see me, to speak to me, where can I be secure against this obstinate resolution ? he will find a way to satisfy

satisfy it ; he may obtain from chance, perhaps from my weakness, the conversation he so pressingly demands : are men ever weary of any pursuit in which their caprice engages them ? They are never humbled by our repulses ; this is one of the advantages they reserve to themselves.

Has a woman the misfortune to love, to love too tenderly ? Does she grow weary of her lover ? What reproaches, what persecutions is she not obliged to suffer ? She may banish him : but he returns, he seeks her every where, he pursues her ; he complains, threatens, beseeches, sighs, abandons himself to his passion ; being heard, is a consolation he will not refuse himself. He is very little anxious, whether this conduct gives uneasiness or disgust : his soul is not delicate enough to be wounded by the idea of becoming importunate. Attentive to himself only, nothing can make him renounce a good of which he flatters himself with the possession ; and often, by the force of obstinacy, he obtains if not the heart, at least the person, the strongest object of his attachment. He, when he finds his chain heavy, breaks it, and abandons us without pity : He sees not our tears, he hears not our complaints. Our native softness, and a decent pride, force us to hide our sorrows—Ah ! how is it possible

possible we can be so weak to give up our hearts! Love is to us the source of so much wretchedness—A reflection strikes me, my dear; it is that I must certainly weary you: I tell you my thoughts as they rise, and heaven knows they contain nothing amusing—O, how displeased am I with myself, how little pleased with others! There is Sir Harry who has the vapours, and swoons away like a woman. He was with me this morning; his vertigo's seized him; I knew not what to do to bring him to himself. I could find nothing but a bottle of perfumed water; I threw it all on his face: his sister cried out I should poison him—I hope he will come here no more; at least, that he will find some other place to faint in. Adieu!



LETTER XXVI.

Thursday, Winchester.

NOthing yet from Lord Offory. Not answer me! It becomes him well to behave with haughtiness—He is displeased perhaps—Was my letter so cruel?—The vain creature cannot support the style of Indifference from a woman who once expressed such tenderness for him;

him : that of hatred would have offended him less——Ah ! if I was to write to him at present——But no more, let us not think of him.

I have received two letters from Lord Castle-Cary ; he complains of you. I will tell him he is in the wrong ; but to you I must say he has reason for his complaints. You laugh at his jealousy : you are to blame : if you had ever felt it's horrors, you would not allow yourself to imbitter his torments by these pleasantries. With a tender and generous nature, is it possible you can ridicule an involuntary emotion, which affects the soul with such exquisite sorrow ? It is a folly you say, and an extravagance : it may be so, but it is a folly that wounds one to desperation. It is in the anguish of a man who adores her, that Lady Henrietta finds amusement : he ought to be sure of your tenderness, to know you, to believe you. Does love then listen to reason ? By reflecting on my own sentiments ; I have perhaps, acquired some little knowledge of the human heart. She, my dear, who can laugh at the inquietude, at the sorrow of a man who is attached to her, either no longer loves him, or deceived herself when she imagined she ever loved him.

The anguish of a lover cannot be indifferent to a mistress, who returns his passion; she is afflicted, because he is sad; she weeps, because his tears flow: she seeks to calm, to dissipate, the chagrins which she partakes—Ah! how can one give those pains, and render them yet more bitter by railleries, by a gait, that—Fie, Henrietta! fie! You have retarded Lord Castle-Cary's happiness: soften at least this tedious, time of expectation, by a complaisance which you owe to the sincerity and warmth of his affection. I love him; you know it: and your faults may fall a little upon me. He writes me letters of four pages, all filled with your cruelties: you are angry with him, and he is wretched. Pardon him for your friend's sake. He does not wish to hide you from the world; he desires to have you admired: appear, show yourself, go every where, he consents to it: be lovely in the eyes of all mankind; but do not value yourself on being so, in any eyes but his. Adieu! he desires me to chide you; I do chide you; but I do not love you the less.

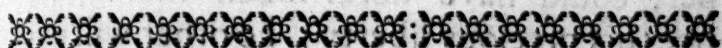
L E T T E R XXVII.

Friday, Winchester.

LORD Offory's letter has touched you : you think my answer too haughty ; you do not approve this excess of severity —Go on, my dear, add to my uneasiness. I admire with what ease we adapt every thing to our own present sentiments : you had just forgiven Lord Castle-Cary when you sat down to write. Softened by the pleasures of a tender reconciliation, you think I ought to pardon also ; that it is cruelty not to pardon. You entreat me, you conjure me to hear Lord Offory. If I was inclined to give you that proof of complaisance, is it in my power? —How can I listen to him! He no longer desires to be heard——You pity him! Can you then believe that after his desertion of me, after his marriage, and two years of forgetfulness, my indifference has power to afflict him!——He wished only to try me : his vanity persuaded him, I still loved him; that his least concessions would destroy my resolutions. Without doubt, his offering to justify himself, was sufficient to efface the remembrance of his perfidy, of a treachery of the blackest kind ; I ought

to have flown to receive the heart he deigned to restore to me: so valuable a blessing merited my eager acceptance; my gratitude perhaps—inupportable insolence of men! Intolerable pride!—I ought, however, to thank Lord Offory; his last caprice has been of more service to me than time or reason: it has destroyed the remains of that inclination, over which I feared I could never have triumphed: I could not till now, think of this ingrate without tenderness; at present I could behold him without the least emotion; I am tranquil: I no longer fear his sight, his importunities: is not this the very point I have so ardently wished to arrive at?—With what cruelty has he sought to disturb my peace of mind, to rekindle that love which he was never worthy to inspire me with? from whence comes it then, that I ever loved him with such fondness? I have been looking at his picture this morning; I held it above an hour in my hand; I contemplated it without being affected; I am even astonished at my former attachment. Why has that image alone had power over my heart? What is there in him so seducing? What delusion lent such charms to that countenance? Where are those graces which I admired in those features?—O, my dear Henrietta! our
 prepossession

prepossession makes all the merit of the object we prefer to others : it adorns the idol of our hearts ; it gives him every day some new ornament. By degrees, the splendor, in which we have cloathed him, dazzles ourselves, imposes on us, seduces us ; and we foolishly adore the creature of our own imagination. This portrait, once so dear, is that of a deceiver : Alas ! I long regarded it as the representation of a being almost celestial ! I cannot see him !—I hate him—I hate myself—But I love you always.



L E T T E R XXVIII.

Saturday, Winchester.

YOU die with desire, that Sir Harry should declare himself. Behold him declared, proposed, and rejected ! Lady Wilton painted to me in the strongest colours her brother's love, his respect, the silence he had imposed on himself for fear of displeasing me ; and passing from his praises to mine, she expressed the most obliging desire of acquiring in me a sister as well as a friend. You will judge of my embarrassment, my dear, and of the polite evasions it forced me to make use of, I urged my disgust almost invincible to marriage

riage, for the little happiness I had found in that state; my insensibility to love; the habit of liberty which I could not lose without regret. Indeed, I do not make that use of my freedom, which attaches most widows of my age to the state; but it gives me the same species of pleasure which a miser feels in calculating his riches: he enjoys the blessings which he knows he can procure, and possesses, in imagination, all those which the extent of his fortune make attainable. One man only, said I to her, could have determined me to sacrifice this precious liberty: no other will ever have the same ascendant over my soul. Lady Wilton is satisfied with the reasons I have alledged; but for Sir Harry, to whom she has communicated my sentiments, he is very far from approving them. There is no living with him any longer; he does not speak to me, does not look at me; contradicts every body; scolds other people's servants, drives away his own, breaks every thing he touches, throws down all he finds in his way: goes like an Idiot across the parterres, and coming back, in a reverie, strikes his head against the gate which is shut, astonished to find himself stopped——But how unjust is this sex! Is their humour a law? At what is Sir Harry angry? Has he a right to expect his will should

should determine mine? I have loved one creature of his species——Ah! that is sufficient——But I have a letter from you——Alas of what do you inform me! That Lady Egberth has quitted the court, has resigned her place——How I pity her! How her misfortune touches me? She is given up to retirement, to devotion, and it is Lord Westbury's death which has caused this great change: a very extraordinary one without doubt: no body had more reason to be attached to the world than this Lady——Ah! my dear! To lose a man she loved so sincerely; that she had so long loved; to have surmounted so many obstacles; to be on the point of espousing him, and to see him snatched from her in a day, in a moment, by an accident——I cannot restrain my tears at this melancholy event. But what madness is it in men of rank to run the hazard in these races, of losing without honour, a life dear to their country, and which they ought only to expose for it? Are they not responsible to their friends, their relations who love them? was he not so to a mistress, who is plunged by the loss of him into sorrow and despair? poor Lady Egberth! Her situation, and the reflections it has engaged you to make, has melted my heart. Adieu!

L E T-

LETTER XXIX.

Sunday, Winchester.

AH! how shall I tell you! How express to you!—Have I strength to write? —Alas how could I complain of him! —Henrietta! my dear Henrietta! he is ill, dangerously ill—Lord Offory is dying! my God! He is dying—See the billet which I have just received.

To Lady CATESBY.

I have now but a few moments to live; the countenances of those about me, and the resistance they make to my will, assure me of it. It is with difficulty I obtain permission to write—Alas! why have I so much desired it! What have I to say to you? You will hear with pleasure that the object of your contempt, of your aversion, has finished his wretched days—Ah! Lady Catesby! What Cruelty!—But is this a time to complain of it! Pardon at least the memory of an unhappy lover; I have never deceived you: I have loved you always. Those letters which you have demanded of me with an inflexibility, of which I thought your heart incapable,

pable,

pable, shall be faithfully restored to you after my death. Do not, madam, deprive me of them whilst I yet breath.

After his death—I shall hear with pleasure—Can he believe this, can he imagine it!—Ah! inhuman! There remained only this blow—Ill! dying perhaps—Alas where is he? With whom? In what hands!—Has he advice? Is there any near him? O, this anguish is insupportable.

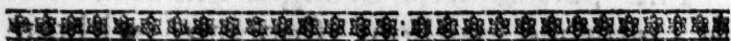
The person who brought this fatal billet, returned without stopping, without waiting a moment, without speaking a single word. How shall I find out—Abandoned to my fears, to the most lively inquietude—Ah! pity me! my heart is torn in pieces. A! feeble hope dawns upon my mind: I have sent to the house where one of Lord Ossory's servants passed two or three days. They assure me, that servants came from Sir Charles Halifax's who has lately bought an estate four miles from hence.

I have dispatched away! John, with all possible haste, to inform himself if Lord Ossory is there, with orders to stay where ever he finds him, and send me messengers continually to let me know the state in which he is. In this sad suspense, my eyes and hands are raised to heaven:

Lady

106 L E T T E R XXX.

Lady Egberth is ever present to my idea : I fear——All powerful God ! May my ardent prayer reach thy awful throne ! May it suspend thy decree ! Vouchsafe at least to change the object ! If the end of one of us, must be the terrible warning voice to bring back to thee the erring heart of the other, ah ! let it be me ! Let my death rekindle in his soul, that love which is due to thee alone ! O, my dear Henrietta ! if he dies you have no longer a friend.



L E T T E R XXX.

Tuesday, Winchester.

HE is a little better ; but his fever is constant and violent ; happily the most dangerous symptoms have left him these two days. He has yet moments of delirium, in which he is very restless. Alas ! he is not out of danger ! I did not write to you yesterday ; I can now scarce hold my pen ; I am not myself ; I have not tasted food. Shut up in my chamber, I admit no body ; it is impossible for me either to listen or to answer any one. They directed me very well : Lord Ossory is at Sir Charles Halifax's, in the midst of

as good assistance as London itself could have procured him. By a happy chance, Dr. Harrison is in the country ; he is with him. John has wrote me word, that when he arrived he found the whole family in tears. Alas ! I believe him. Who can know Lord Offory, and not feel for him ? How is it possible to avoid loving him ? So noble in his manners, so gentle, so benevolent ; the good qualities of his soul are painted on his countenance : he conquers all hearts : I never heard him mentioned, without an encomium following his name. What man ever more amiable joined true dignity with good nature, with that familiarity which is not afraid to condescend, and which impresses more deeply that respect, it seems to resign all claim to ? Who but must lament that a being so worthy to exist is going perhaps to perish—I expect with fear, with impatience—But some body enquires for my woman—Ah ! what happiness!—
 “ A tranquil night, five hours sleep, no delirium, the fever considerably abated : Dr. Harrison will answer for his life, and even for his quick recovery. O, my tender, my sincere friend ! Give me joy ! I bless God whose goodness has restored him to me—tears of pleasure fill my eyes—Ah ! may he live ! may he be happy !
 May

108 L E T T E R XXXI.

May every blessing he desires be his portion! Amiable, and dear Offory, thou accusest me of cruelty! That thou couldst read my heart, and hear the vows it offers up for thee! How cruel are the forms which keep me here! Why is it not allowed me to fly to thee! To partake, to soften all thy pains! to bathe thy face with those tears, which are drawn from me by that eternal fondness which attaches me to thee! Ah! rekindle all thy hopes! She whom thou lovest, is not cruel, she is not inhuman! she will pardon thee, see thee, love thee! Ah! my God! Whither does this too lively emotion carry me!—O, my good, my indulgent friend! Pardon my foolish wandering—I am not myself—My soul is hurried along——But I feel myself burning—disordered——I cannot hold up my head; my eyes are heavy——Alas! what is it that makes me thus——Adieu! he will live, my dear! My prayers are granted.



L E T T E R XXXI.

Saturday, Winchester.

I Have passed three days without writing to you, my dear, and I am afraid my
silence

silence has made you uneasy, I have had a sore throat, a fever and my pulse very irregular : they bled me in spight of myself. Sir Harry would not lose this opportunity of shewing his officious zeal : he has taken possession of my apartment ; he does all the honours of it : this man is really good ; he is unhappy : he sometimes makes me pity him ; but oftener wearies me with his assiduity : I have a Heart too full of sensibility not to compassionate his love, though too much prepossessed to return it.

John is come back : Lord Ossory is upon his recovery, and they hope his health will soon be quite re-established : I feel at present another kind of inquietude from the indiscretion of my messenger——But here is Abraham, my lord's valet de chambre——My God, what can he want with me ? How my heart flutters ! So alarmed at one of his servants ! What should I then be if my lord himself——what contradictions reign in my weak heart ? A few days since I wished ardently to see him, and now the name only of his servant disorders me——He brings me a letter——poor Abraham ! He is overjoyed to see me again, he cannot speak to me——But let me read his letter——It is with difficulty he has

K

wrote

110 L E T T E R XXXI.

wrote it—He has been very ill—See, my dear, what he says.

To Lady CATESBY.

Have you then deigned, Madam, to interest yourself in my life? This goodness touches me to the soul. But do I owe it to your compassion alone, or to the feeble remains of that tender friendship—Alas! I scarce dare flatter myself you preserve the slightest remembrance of it.—How sweet would it be to me to think it not intirely extinguished; to think it still possible the ardor of my heart might rekindle it in yours! But you will not hear me. Receive, madam, my respectful acknowledgments: without examining into the nature of the sentiment which has inspired you with so generous a concern for my danger, I ought to think myself blest in having excited it.

You see he is no stranger to the anxiety I have been in for his life. It is to John, my impertinent servant, I am obliged for these perplexing acknowledgments. But I am forced to bid you adieu: they wait for my letter: I would not leave you a day longer in uncertainty of what had caused my silence? I must write an answer for Abraham to take. Ah! my dear, of what importance is that answer!

L E T-

LETTER XXXII.

Sunday, Winchester.

SEE, my dear Henrietta into what an embarrassment I am thrown by my vivacity, by the precipitation with which I sent away John, without giving him orders to conceal himself, without commanding him not to mention my name! The imprudent creature thought he could not execute his commission, better than by going directly to Sir Charles Hallifax's, enquiring for Abraham, telling him he came from me, and desiring permission to place himself in Lord Offory's antechamber. My lord, charmed to hear one of my servants was so near him, and that he came by my orders, insisted on seeing him: Mr. John, as he told me himself, received this command to enter, with great pleasure: he answered all my lord's questions with great exactness: assured him: "his lady was more dead than alive when she sent him; that she had a great deal of friendship for his lordship, and was scarce satisfied with three expresses a day, which he had the honour to send her.

If you had seen with what satisfaction this idiot gave me an account of his commission,

mission, how he applauded himself on the wonders he had done! After all, I ought only complain of my own want of foresight. I sent back Abraham yesterday without any answer: I excused myself on account of the present weakness of my head. Alas! it is not that I most fear: the weakness of my heart is what restrains me—Abraham again—Another letter—I need not take the pains to copy this: it is almost exactly the same with the last; except the addition of much inquietude on account of my indisposition, which no longer exists. “See me, madam, hear me”—Always the same. I must answer it; but what difficulty do I find in writing to him! His zealous messenger tells Betty he must not return without a letter. In proportion as my fears for his life vanish, anger resumes it’s empire over my soul. I am sorry Lord Ossory can no longer doubt that friendship, of which he artfully pretends to be so uncertain: by this pretence, he humours my vanity; his address does not escape me. O, these men! these men! Observe how they make their advantage of every thing! When all means of subduing our resolves seem to fail, an unforeseen incident, chance, a fit of sickness, brings them to the point they had in view. We refuse to see, to listen to them! we
fancy

fancy all at an end, but their resources are never exhausted. When the discarded lover knows not how to proceed otherwise, he has a fever, my dear ; he has but a moment to live ; he fills our imagination with terror ; he represents himself in a light, which cannot fail of softening us, he places before our eyes the alarming idea of his death, of the dissolution of that enchanting form which first seduced our unguarded hearts ; and the most malignant fever is not what kills him, no 'tis our cruelty ? Lord Offory has forgot to say that—But Abraham waits—I never thought I had so little understanding ; I am quite at a loss what to say—O, that abominable John ! Why did he not conceal himself ! But why do I talk thus idly ! —Is not he who writes to me, the same Lord Offory, who has caused me such exquisite afflictions, who abandoned me at Hertford, who married Fanny Montford ? Are these injuries lessened ? No ; but he has been sick. I will write to him—I have wrote—I shall not send you a copy of my answer ; it is very short, very studied, and very bad. Adieu my dear Henrietta ! my tenderness for you is always the same.

L E T T E R R XXXIII.

Monday, Winchester.

I Come from taking a walk on the banks of a rivulet, which bathes the walls of a pavilion, where I often go to see them fish. As it was very early, I amused myself with observing across the river, some young country girls, who were going with baskets of flowers and fruits to the neighbouring town. They sung, they laughed in their boat ; they presented the very image of joy ; their habits were neat, their baskets prettily arranged. They wore large straw hats, under which, one is apt to fancy every face handsome ; they were really very agreeable. As the boat went off, one better made than the rest, arrived ; she appeared very melancholy, and without showing any regret, because they had not stayed for her, she set down her basket upon a heap of gravel, and began to walk backwards and forwards by the river side. I bid Betty call her ; she came to us ; I purchased all her nosegays, and asked her, why she did not sing like the others ? My question moved her ; she endeavoured to restrain her tears, and told me with a most charming sincerity, that she

was

was ready to break her heart ; “ that Moses, one of Lord Wilton’s tenants, had made her die with grief, she and an other : and that the remembrance of that other made her shed a great many tears.” The poor child interested me, I would know all, and here you have the history of my little gardener. It is, that Moses—Pray attend, my dear—Moses is a wicked Miser ; he had agreed that Tommy his grandson should marry Sally, who loves Tommy as she loves her eyes. The wedding day was fixed, the clothes were bought, the relations invited, the fiddles bespoke ; and behold, a letter which came from Oxford, has induced Moses to change his mind. Tommy’s sister is dead, and has left him some money, and the vile Moses, will not now accept Sally for his grand-daughter ; at least, unless her fortune is encreased in proportion to Tommy’s inheritance. Sally’s mother, who is very proud, has broke off the match : and as she is pretty high spirited, she will twist Sally’s neck off, if she loves the grandson of that Jew Moses ; and poor Sally must have her neck twisted off, for she will always love him ; and honest Tommy will break his heart too, rather than renounce Sally.

Between

Between the happiness, and the misery, of these simple and tender lovers, an hundred and fifty guineas was an insurmountable barrier : I have removed it, my dear : the Jew Moses, the proud gardener, honest Tommy and pretty Sally, are all agreed again. This moment is one of those in which I have felt the advantage of being rich : the day after to-morrow, I am to marry my amiable villager, and I intend to marry her with splendor. I give a grand supper, an illumination, fire works, and musick on the water ; which will be followed by a masquerade, at which every body will be welcome. Lord Wilton has lent me the pavilion on the river ; it is large, finely ornamented, and very proper for my design. The ladies are all enchanted with this feast : Sir Harry, in spite of his ill humour, is my steward ; he receives my orders with as much gravity, as if he was taking out a patent to be prime minister. Lady Wilton, and Sir James, are to do the honours of the masquerade ; Lady Sunderland of the supper ; as to me, I shall be employed in observing whether they acquit themselves well of the commissions I have entrusted them with. I am gay, my dear, I begin to resume my taste for amusements ; I will not examine the cause of this alteration ; I should find it perhaps

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perhaps—Do not fancy however, that Sally's marriage is a pretence for celebrating the recovery of Poor Lord Offory—Is it not thus you call him?—John, however, does not know ; my secret is safe : Adieu ! my dear Henrietta ! I wish I could see you dance at this ball.

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LETTER XXXIV.

Tuesday, Winchester

ANOTHER letter—A very exact and a very dangerous correspondence ; I have every moment occasion to remind myself that Lord Offory has betrayed me. In spite of this remembrance, how shall I resist the tender emotions of my heart ? They persuade me to listen to him. But what can he say ? His reiterated offers to justify himself, astonish, and offend me. Ah ! how is it possible ! He married ; he has even a daughter by this marriage—They say she is called Juliet—Insolent ! To give my name to the daughter of his wife ! Lady Arthur, aunt to the late Lady Offory, has been here eight days ; she talks continually of the graces and beauty of this little Juliet : I never met with so impertinent a crea-

a creature : but I will give you my lord's letter.

To Lady C A T E S B Y.

Alas ! Madam ! On what do you congratulate me ? Of what value to me is the life which you refuse to make happy ? From you these cold civilities ! Ah ! you could not afflict me more sensibly than by this insulting politeness ; it is always attended by indifference. It is your pity, your tender pity which is necessary to my peace ; it is the condescension of one day, one hour that I entreat of you. Will you not hear me ? Am I condemned without hope of pardon ? Will you refuse me a favour which is granted to the vilest criminals ? We have at least been friends—Do you then no longer remember you have given me a still foster name ? Our mutual love, your promises, your tender vows, are they all effaced ? Recall Hertford to your remembrance, my dear, my adorable Juliet.—It is a man once honoured with your tenderness, who begs of you, upon his knees, one moment's conversation. By all that has power to move you, I conjure you not to reject my prayer ! Do not continue to afflict an unhappy man, whose fate is in your hands. No ; I will not give
up,

L E T T E R XXXIV. 119

up, but with my life, the hope of obtaining your generous forgiveness. I have a secret which I cannot reveal but to yourself: give me one day, madam ; in the name of Heaven be not inexorable.

His Dear, his Adorable Juliet ; familiar enough, upon my word : and you see with what obstinacy he resolves to be heard. Ah ! That sickness ! In what has it engaged me ? See him ! The very idea of an interview makes me tremble. But this audacity of determining to see me !—How strangely resolute ! ought he not to fly my very looks ? With what face can he appear before me ? Have not I a right to load him with reproaches ?—Yet he is not afraid to see me ! whence comes it then, that I am in dread of him ? I, who can lift my eyes up to him with that noble confidence, which is the offspring of integrity and innocence ? He bids me remember Hertford ! Alas ! if he had seen me after his departure, would he have dared to bid me remember it ? He knows the wrongs he has done me ; but how far is he from imagining how exquisitely I have felt them ! Can he ever excuse that cruel desertion ? Ah ! Why did he ever feign a passion for me ? Why does he yet feign it ? I had prepared myself with pleasure for the entertainment

I am

I am to give ! This letter comes to disturb my joy, to embarrass me, to revive the memory of those hours—Ah ! nothing has had power to efface it—You, will perhaps laugh at my chagrins; you tell me I ought to have seen him, To have heard him, That all should be forgot. You, who have never had any thing to pardon but the slightest faults, a few emotions of jealousy, of impatience, of ill humour perhaps, you think one may resolve in a moment; that it is easy to determine—I cannot comprehend that hope of pardon. My design is not to afflict him: I would see him, if I thought I could bear his presence: I would hear him if it was possible to excuse—But I will write to him this moment.

To Lord OSSORY.

Wherefore, my lord, should I not have forgot long since an attachment I have found such reason to regret ? What should engage me to cherish the memory of the most unfaithful of men ? Have you not already made it your request, I would forget you ? How can you without confusion, endeavour to recall that time, and those scenes, to my remembrance, which I cannot

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not think of without hating you? What right have you now to ask my friendship, after having made so cruel a return to that I was once weak enough to feel for you? If your levity has restored me to myself, you ought only to blame your own heart. I am ignorant what new caprice makes you assert that your happiness depends on the conversation you ask of me; but I cannot prevail on myself to grant it. So long accustomed to think I should never see you again, it is impossible for me to support even the idea of your presence. If you have any secrets it is necessary you should communicate to me, I consent to your writing them: you may depend on my secrecy, and on my punctuality, in returning immediately whatever you please to write. To receive your letters, my lord, is the only complaisance I can force myself to shew you.

I am forry I have sent this letter: they say that in lovers quarrels, reproaches are the preliminaries of peace. Adieu! my amiable Henrietta! Believe, I love you always.

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LET.

L E T T E R XXXV.

Wednesday—no—Thursday.
Six in the Morning.

O My dearest Henrietta ! How shall I express to you the tumult, the emotion of my heart ! I have seen him—He has spoke to me——It was himself——He was at the masquerade——Yes, he—My Lord Offory—Ah ! tell me no more of seeing him, of hearing him—I am now certain I am unable to bear the presence of that—I know not what name to give him. Could any thing be more daring, or more imprudent ? To expose me thus—I think I hate him—I wish, notwithstanding, I had possessed more power over myself—I wish I had heard him. What is then this unknown emotion which drags me with irresistible force, and compells me to act contrary to my will ? I must go from hence ; I must return to London—It is not from obstinacy, but from necessity, from weakness, I fly Lord Offory. I must resolve to avoid him, since I am not able to see him with any degree of tranquility.

The day was already far advanced, when fatigued with dancing, and weary of the ball, I went to take the air on the terrace, which

which joins to the pavilion. A mask in a black domino, who had followed me above an hour, came and seated himself by my side. In a place so spacious, and where it was apparent I sought only solitude, I thought it a little extraordinary he should chuse the very seat on which I had placed myself, merely to be troublesome; but judge of my surprise, when seizing one of my hands, and pressing it between his, he said, in a faltering and passionate tone, "Does Lady Catesby then still delight in making others happy? I was told that species of pleasure had no longer any charms for her." The sound of that known voice penetrated the inmost recesses of my soul: I knew him instantly: Ah! what other man would have presumed to take such a liberty, to address me in such a style—I would have fled from him; he seized my robe, and held me in my place. At the same instant, hastily throwing off his mask, the hood of his dominio fell off—Ah! my dear Henrietta! How lovely did he appear! The disorder of his hair gave a new grace to his features; an air passionate, animated—How different was the effect which the sight of that amiable countenance had on me, from what might have been expected! I lost, that moment, the faculties of sight and hearing: a mortal coldness

coldness seized me. I am ignorant what Lord Offory said to me, or how he assembled the company about me : but when my senses returned, I found myself surrounded by an infinite number of persons, among whom my eyes sought in vain for Lord Offory : I perceived him at last at the farther end of the terrace, from whence, as soon as he saw me perfectly recovered, he retired with precipitation. The ball is now at an end, and I am now writing to you in bed, full of reflection, of uneasiness. I know not how to act. Adieu.



LETTER XXXVI.

Friday, Winchester.

I Have received such pressing invitations from Lord Osmond ; my cousin and his lordship continue to entreat me with such earnestness to come to Hertford, that I cannot long resist their importunities. I know not why, but I feel my repugnance to return thither greatly abated. I have mentioned my design here, and if I was vain, should value myself highly on the unwillingness which every body expresses to part with me. Sir James goes away at the same time : as to poor Sir Harry,
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his sorrow is inexpressible ; it gives me extreme pain : I hope my absence will be of service to him : they tell us, my dear, absence is a salutary remedy for love ; a violent one however, which the patient takes with disgust, and which does not succeed with all constitutions. I am coming nearer to you, my amiable friend : what pleasure do I find in that thought ! After staying some time at Hertford, I shall return to London, and we will go together to a pretty house at Hampstead—Here is Abraham—What a packet he brings me ! all in my lord's hand—Permit me, my dear, to leave you—I burn to read it—What is it he can say to me ? You shall know as soon as I have read the packet over

To Lady C A T E S B Y.

The adventure of the ball has too well convinced me, madam, how vain it is to hope from chance, or my own address, the happiness of a conversation with you. The horror my presence gave you, the condition in which I saw you, and the grief I felt at being the cause, have determined me to give up all thoughts of approaching you without your positive command. I consent to commit to writing what I intended

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to have related to you on Wednesday, if you had been able to have favoured me with a hearing. You engage to keep my secret; I know you too well to have the least doubt of your discretion: however, as it may be painful to you to conceal it from Lady Henrietta, a story in which you are so much interested, I dispence with your promise of secrecy in favour of this lady: whoever is dear to you, acquires by that claim, a right over my heart: to me it is impossible your friend can be indifferent. Ah! Lady Catesby! if after reading these papers, you are not inclined to pardon me, you never loved him, whose passion for you cannot end but with his life.

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HISTORY

OF

LORD OSSORY.

WHEN Lady Charlot Chester had given that preference to the Marquess of Dorchester, which I flattered myself my assiduity, and the sincerity of my attachment, had given me a better right to expect, I determined to avoid her, and went into France with that design. I was sensibly affected by her perfidy : it prejudiced me unjustly against the whole sex ; I judged of all, by the only one with whom I had any connection ; and was strongly persuaded that interest and vanity were

were the only passions of which they were susceptible. I armed myself against them, with the knowledge I fancied I had of their souls, and employed my experience with success to defend me against the power of their charms.

I was represented at court, and wherever I appeared, as a savage, who to that ferocity attributed to his nation, joined an obstinate aversion to the established manners and customs of the world. My gravity appeared ridiculous, especially at a time of life when the wild and irregular sallies of youth, for which youth is an excuse, are not unbecoming. I know not how far the French carry their indulgence on this head; but here I have seen too many, who not knowing when to drop this excuse, have not been able, in their more advanced age, to forget the follies of their youth.

Six months after my departure from London, my eldest brother was killed in a Sea engagement, and my second died in Scotland of a fall from his horse in hunting. My fortune was now become equal to Lord Dorchester's, and I fancied Lady Dorchester might possibly repent having been so precipitate in fixing her choice:
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the regret I flattered myself she would feel, was the only real advantage I then hoped for, inheriting the estates and titles of my ancestors.

My abode in France did not remove the impressions I carried thither : I thought the women charming, but the idea of Lady Charlot and the remembrance of her inconstancy, defended me from love. I returned to London, cured of my passion, but not of my resentment at having been abandoned, The sight of Lady Dorchester chagrined me, and gave me a disgust to London : I resolved therefore to quit it once more, and was preparing for a second tour to Italy, when Osmond, hearing of my return, pressed me to make him a visit at Hertford : I accepted his invitation, intending to stay a few days only ; but I found in your eyes, attractions strong enough to fix me in my native country, and reconcile me to that amiable sex, of which Lady Catesby is the brightest ornament. You inspired me with sentiments before unknown to me : sentiments which convinced me I never loved Lady Charlot, and that wounded vanity may excite in our souls those regrets, which seem to
take

take their source only from betrayed or neglected love.

Ashby importuned you with his addresses; his example intimidated me: the aversion his tenderness gave you to him, determined me to spare no pains to conceal mine. Listened to, preferred as a friend, I dreaded appearing as a lover. I found it so sweet to be honoured with your confidence, to make one in all your amusements, to behold you every moment without wearying you, or inspiring you with constraint; that I had not courage to risk losing all those advantages, by making a declaration of my passion. Sometimes I fancied you saw what passed in my soul: I one day forgot I had no right to appear jealous; my anger and ill-humour became visible to every body: my sorrow affected you; it affected you too nearly.—What pleasure do I feel in recollecting those first moments of my happiness! Those blisful hours, when without being yourself perhaps conscious of it, you partook of all the soft emotions of my soul! They are past, those transporting moments, and Lady Catesby remembers them no more:

With

With what pain did I conceal from you sentiments so tender and animated ! How did the remembrance of Lady Charlot intimidate me ! I no longer regarded her inconstancy in the same light ; since I had loved you, I excused her levity ; and concluded, I possessed none of those attractions which give birth to love, and render it lasting. I at length presumed to confess my passion ; my vows were heard ; you yielded to give me your hand : every thing conspired to promise happiness to my future days. In the intoxication of joy, too ready to flatter myself, I added to my account of present pleasure, the supreme felicity which was so soon to be my portion, when I received an invitation to be present at the marriage of Lord Newport. I know not whether a foreboding of my misfortune encreased my regret at parting from you, but I left Hertford overwhelmed with sorrow. Before I enter into the humiliating detail of the fatal adventure which separated us, permit me to implore your indulgence—But how can I hope to soften you, if I am no longer dear to you ; if my very sight alarms you ; if that heart once so sensible to my least inquietude, is now for ever barred against me ? what repated vows do you betray, if the care
of

of my happiness no longer interests you ! Cannot the remembrance of a passion so dear to us both, of those pure and exquisite pleasures it once bestowed, rekindle in your bosom a spark of that fire which my seeming infidelity has extinguished ? Ah ! Madam ! let love again spread a veil before your eyes, to hide from you my fault, and only permit you to see my repentance.

I was returning to Hertford, with all the haste and impatience of a lover, eager to behold again the object of all his wishes, when on the road I happened to meet Monfort, Bennet, Anderson, Lindsey, and several others, who had been my acquaintance at the university ; except Montfort, who was my particular friend, I had scarce seen any of them since I left the college : they had stopped Abraham, who was a little before me, and when I came to the post-house, where they waited for me, they insisted on stopping me also. They were returning from hunting, and were going to sup with Montfort, whose mother had a house in the neighbourhood. It was impossible to resist their entreaties, or, to speak with more propriety, their importunities : they obliged me to accept

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an invitation which promised little amusement to a man of my temper, and robbed me of the pleasure of arriving soon enough that night at Hertford, to see you even for a moment. These hours were stolen from love; I lost them with inexpressible regret, and made the sacrifice with an extreme repugnance. Montford's mother was gone that very morning to London, whither she was called by unforeseen business: thus our supper became one of those noisy and libertine parties, from whence order and politeness are banished; which sometimes end in ridiculous wagers, and often, even in breaking to pieces every moveable in the way, and cutting each others throats amidst the ruins. Disgust seized me during the first course; it increased every moment; The insupportable mirth of my companions, in which I could not share; the confused noise of their voices, all speaking at the same time; and the unbounded freedom of their conversation, made me curse a thousand times the hour in which I was so unfortunate to meet them. The coolness I preserved in the midst of these madmen, added to the distaste they inspired me with. I perceived it; and willing to remove some part of the horror I felt at my situation, I fancied the only

means would be to lose, like the rest, a portion of my reason : I could not now reach Hertford early enough to see you ; I resolved therefore to do as others did, and endeavour to partake of their foolish and contemptible gaiety : my project succeeded ; I drank freely, and began soon to find my old companions a little more supportable. The conversation turned on a variety of subjects, none of which were pursued very far ; It fell at last on women, they talked with more vivacity than decency : Some praised them in the strongest terms, others spoke of them with the most illiberal contempt. Lindsey, naturally tender and polite, defended them with warmth : he brought the whole company over to his opinion, that the sweetness of being loved by one, infinitely surpassed the malignant pleasure of slandering them all. We now vied with each other in extolling these charming beings, on whom heaven has bestowed the power of rendering us happy. One spoke of their beauty, the charms of which have such an empire over our hearts ; another extolled their wit, still more enchanting, the fineness of their taste, and the delicacy of their sentiments. Montford alone insisted that an uncultivated understanding, and ingenuous modesty,

modesty, infinitely exceeded that knowledge and those accomplishments, on which women of condition value themselves, and that the most simple were the most amiable : the point was warmly disputed ; he persisted ; and to prove the truth of what he advanced, sent orders to his sister's governess to join the company, with her lovely charge. A man must have been as little capable of reflection as he then was, to think of exposing a sister to the impropriety of appearing in the midst of ten or twelve young libertines, flushed with wine, and little in a condition to recollect what they owed to her rank, her sex, her blooming season of life. Whilst we waited in expectation of her entrance, Montford informed us, that she came only the preceding day from the school, in which she had been educated ; he expressed the most lively friendship for her, and assured us no body could be more simple or more amiable. The young lady came, to confirm by her presence, the praises her brother had lavished on her ingenuous simplicity : her air expressed her character ; soft, modest, unaffected : a noble form, graceful in all it's motions, compensated for the want of perfect symmetry : she had all those charms which

accompany the first bloom of youth ; and her features without being regularly beautiful, were altogether infinitely attractive. She placed herself by her brother, and in obedience to his repeated commands, pledged his friends in those healths which they all at once eagerly proposed to her. Her presence having reanimated their joy, it was happy for her that her extreme simplicity made her ignorant of the transports she excited, and of the expressions in which they magnified her charms. Bennet took charge of the governess, and soon rendered her incapable of attending to the care of her lovely pupil. Miss Montford, weary of a kind of conversation to which she was not accustomed, insisted on leave to retire : she obtain'd it, though with difficulty ; and quitted us with much greater pleasure than she had felt at coming amongst us. Some moments after, distracted with noise, and fainting with excessive heat, I rose up to go into the air, of which I had never more occasion : I walked through the hall, and found myself in a passage, in which there was no light : I observed one at some distance, and directing my steps that way, traversed a long gallery of pictures at the end of which, I came
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to a large closet, where I perceived a woman alone: I had not time to distinguish who she was; rising up hastily, she threw down a little table, on which stood a candle which went out in the fall. By the sound of her voice, and her questions, I knew it to be Miss Montford: I told her who I was, and begged the favour of her to direct me to the garden, where I was going to walk for the air: she told me she would ring immediately for a light; but in the profound darkness we were in, it was impossible to find the string of the bell, the apartment being almost as new to her as to myself. She strove however to recollect where the chimney was placed, and we both took a great deal of pains to find it. My embarrassment, and the ill success of our searches, appeared ridiculous to her; she laughed so heartily at our distress, that her gaiety excited mine. The young lady was not much more herself than I was; she called, but in vain; the servants were at too great a distance to hear us: as we walked at random, we struck our heads against each other; Miss Montford redoubled her laughter, ridiculed my uneasiness, and by a thousand childish pleasantries, forced me to laugh also. Determined both of us however to put an

end to this scene, we agreed to give up all hopes of making ourselves heard, and to endeavour to find a door into another gallery, which led to the garden. Miss Montford took me by the hand, and going from one chair to another, found the place where she was sitting when I entered the closet: she told me the door was then directly opposite to us; she advanced, and I followed her: unhappily she had entangled herself in the table she had before thrown down; and fell with violence to the ground; her fall occasioned mine; I was alarmed for her, but her repeated bursts of laughter, soon convinced me she was not hurt. The excess of her mirth had an extraordinary effect on me: it inspired me with a presumption fatal to us both: the intoxication of my reason communicated itself to my heart: abandoned to my senses, I forgot my love, my probity, the laws of honour which had always been sacred to me, the sister of my friend: a woman whom I ought to have respected, appeared to me at that instant, only as a female delivered up to my wishes, to that gross passion which has its source in instinct alone. Hurried away by an impetuous emotion, I had the cruelty to take advantage of the disorder

order and simplicity of a young imprudent, whose artless innocence alone occasioned her error.

Scarce was this moment of madness passed, when reason resuming all it's rights, I saw my fault in it's full extent : the unhappy victim of my crime pierced the air with her cries ; she groaned, she wept, and by her just anguish encreased mine, already too great for expression. The moon just then began to rise, and her dawning light enabled me to find the door, the search of which had been attended with consequences so fatal : confused, ashamed, in all the wildness of despair, I thought of nothing but flight : I went out of that closet which inspired me with horror, and passing from the garden into the court, where my servants waited, I stepped hastily into my chaise, and took the road to Hertford, pierced with the most poignant sorrow, which my reflexions rendered every moment more insupportable.

How severely was it renewed at the sight of you ! With what goodness did your generous heart interest itself in my affliction ! What tender questions ! How did they
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stab my soul with remorse ! How did I abhor myself when I reflected I had betrayed you ? The pleasure, however, of seeing you, of being continually near you, of thinking I was dear to you ; the idea of my approaching happiness ; an invincible charm attached to your looks, to your conversation, altogether alleviated my sorrow. I was beginning to consider my unhappy adventure as a weakness, of which the remembrance might in time be lost, when its dreadful consequences brought it back to my memory with redoubled force, and obliged me to submit to the just punishment of my imprudence ! Ah ! what a punishment ! If you have loved me, if you have deigned to regret me, judge of my sufferings by your own ! Judge of my tortures in forcing myself from you ! From you, whom I adored, whom I must always adore, in whatever manner you may treat me ! You may possibly remember, madam, that a messenger enquired for me, the evening before I left Hertford : he brought me a letter ; it was from Miss Montford, and expressed in the following terms.

To

To Lord OSSORY.

The unhappy sister of your friend, the wretched Fanny Montford, is lost, dishonoured by the indiscretion of her brother, by yours, my lord, and still more, by her own. She tells you this, without knowing what she has to hope from this step: she has nothing to expect from you; you promised nothing: what right then can she pretend? And yet, if you abandon her, have you nothing to reproach yourself with? I ardently entreat your answer: if it does not soften the horrors of my situation, I will not wait till my shame becomes publick: I have already resolved on the only means by which I can escape infamy: I will bury with me this dreadful secret, and nobody shall ever reproach you with the misfortune or the death of

Fanny Montford.

Paint to yourself, madam, my condition after reading this letter: think in what reflections I passed that night, the last of my

my stay at Hertford. I formed a thousand projects; my reason destroyed them, as fast as they presented themselves to my imagination: I thought sometimes of going to Montford, of confessing my crime, and of giving up to his sister half my estate; all, if she required it. Alas! of what value was wealth if deprived of you! But how could I have the confidence to propose to my friend a reparation, which, in a parrallel case, I would not myself have accepted? After having injured him, ought I to insult the misery I had caused? To risk becoming the murderer of him, whose sister I had dishonoured, in violation of all the sacred laws of hospitality and friendship? The little innocent too, madam, who owed to me its being, was I allowed to place it in the rank of those born to wretchedness, to deliver it up to baseness and contempt? Would it not bring into the world a right to accuse me, to abhor the author of its existence? The conclusion of the letter froze my veins with terror and apprehension. In the midst of agitations not to be described, of regret which tore my inmost soul; wholly engrossed by my love for you, wild with despair at losing the object of all my tender hopes; I resolved to listen only to the voice of honour, and

and to give up the dearest interests of my heart to the person whose situation demanded this cruel sacrifice.

What struggles had I with myself! How much did this painful effort cost me! It was you whom I abandoned! It was you whom I must renounce! I went to seek you, determined to repose my sorrows in your faithful bosom, to confide to you my crime, and my designs; to implore your advice, your tender commiseration; but my purpose vanished at your sight. How was it possible I could make you such a confession! I found myself unable to begin the shocking recital; I had not even courage to give you a letter I had wrote in the first tumult of my grief: I left you; I bid adieu to Hertford: and quitted you in the melancholy persuasion I should never see you again. I left my letter with Abraham, whom I ordered to deliver to you when I was gone; and joining the messenger, who waited for me at the post-house, I took the road to Middlesex, and went directly to Lady Montford's.

The violence of those different emotions with which I was agitated, and the efforts I made to hide my sorrow, threw me into
a burn-

a burning fever ; I was in a kind of delirium, and scarce knew even myself. As soon as I arrived, I enquired for Montford ; as he was in town, they introduced me to his mother : after some moments of indifferent conversation, I mentioned her daughter, and finding she had no particular view for her, I demanded her in marriage. My offer was received with no less joy than surprise : Lady Montford could not hope so advantageous a match for her daughter ; though of a family which might entitle her to a rank equal to what I offered to raise her to, yet her moderate fortune seemed to forbid such a hope ; her mother conducted me to her apartment, and introduced me as a lover who was soon to become her husband. Miss Montford's face was spread with blushes at seeing me ; she cast down her eyes, and regarded me with a melancholy and timid countenance. As is customary on these occasions, we were left together ; shame and remorse threw me at her feet ; gratitude made her fall at mine : neither of us possessed the power of voice ; sighs and tears were the only expressions of our hearts. I fixed a Day with Lady Montford for signing the marriage articles, and pretending pressing and indispensable

penfable bufinefs, parted in hafte for London. .

I reached my houfe in an agony not to be conceived: I was pierced to the foul with my own sorrow, and yet more with that which I imagined you would feel. As I entered my clofet, a drawing done by your hand ftruck my fight; I could no longer refift the violent emotions of my heart: I gave myfelf up to rage, and uttered exclamations, which drew all my fervants around me: a kind of frenzy deprived me of my fenfes: during a long time, I knew nothing that happened to me; I was infenfible of my illnefs, and of my danger. My fpirits, enfeebled by the violence of my tranfports, and by the medicines which were given me, had reduced me to the weaknefs of infancy. Montford never quitted me; what he had been told of my intentions in regard to his fifter, redoubled his attachment, and rendered his cares more tender, and more attentive: he applauded himfelf on the caprice which inclined him to make her appear at that fupper; he fancied fhe had then infpired me with love, and this belief filled him with tranfport: his difcourfes on this fubject, gave a new poignancy to my sorrows.

N

I re-

I recovered at length, and married Miss Montford. What difficulty had I to restrain my tears at the foot of that altar, where it was supposed I had received from the hands of Heaven, the only companion who could make my life happy ! After having thus torn me from her who only has that power, indulgent Heaven is willing to restore her to me : but she is changed ; she is become haughty, inhuman, unrelenting ; she will not pardon me.

I left London for Derbyshire, whither I conducted a wife, young, soft, tender, grateful, perhaps amiable ; but she was not Lady Catesby ; she was not the dear object my heart had made choice of : whom I must always love, but to whom I could now only dedicate sighs, tears, and a fruitless and unprofitable regret.

Lady Ossory was delivered of a daughter ; the sight of her gave me the first emotion of joy, which I had felt since I left you. Amiable little innocent ! How often have I bathed her with my tears, whilst I applauded myself on having at least fulfilled my duty towards her. Ah ! what tenderness would she not owe her
father,

father, if she knew at what a price he had given her a right to call him by that name!

I passed whole days in the woods to avoid Lady Ossory; I feared her presence; her amiable attention to please, was irksome to me: I had all the regard for her which friendship demanded, but none of the tender solitudes of love: I owed her both notwithstanding; but how could I give to her a heart you had already entire possession of? Conscious I ought to make amends by my generosity for the coldness of my sentiments, and ever ready to procure for her pleasures which I was incapable of partaking, I gave her balls and entertainments, I loaded her with presents; she disposed as she pleased of my fortune; it was all lavished on her, even to profusion: she seemed satisfied, and I believed her happy; time discovered to me she was no more so than myself.

Sometimes I had an inclination to write to you, to open my whole soul, and inform you of my reasons for a marriage which must have surprised you so greatly. But it was my wife, the mother of my lovely infant, whose weakness I must have dis-

closed. Ah! how could I confess to you, there had been a moment of my life in which I had forgot I loved you? In which I had failed in that probity, on which the esteem you had honoured me with was founded! Lord Preston, my friend from my infancy, was alone entrusted with the secret of my passion for you; he knew it even before yourself: to him I addressed myself to make enquiries about you. I heard from him that you continued at Hertford, where you were plunged in grief for the death of your brother——Ah! Pardon to a despairing passion, the strange contrariety of its wishes! What would I not have given to have rendered you happy, to have restored tranquillity to your soul? and yet I felt a secret pleasure in thinking you were at Hertford, that you were there alone, that you were afflicted; that it was possible I might have a right to some part of those precious tears; that amidst the sorrows due to the loss of a beloved brother, a sigh might sometimes escape towards a lover who adored you. Your return to London gave me the most lively inquietudes: you received the duke of Suffolk's visits; jealous, unjust, I trembled lest he should obtain a blessing to
which

which it was no longer in my power to pretend.

I received every week a circumstantial detail of all your actions : the kind of indirect correspondence I seemed by this means to keep up with you, was the only pleasure for which I had now the least relish. How did these details touch my heart ! How did they augment my esteem, and my attachment ! What woman at your age ever conducted herself with so much prudence ! Or ever blended so engagingly the most austere wisdom, with the most amiable vivacity, and exactest knowledge of the world ! What other ever possessed in the same degree those soft, those gentle virtues, which give such charms to social life ! That polite and indulgent condescension to others, which renders, that superiority beloved in you, which you are yourself afraid to display in half its lustre !——Ah ! Lady Catesby ! Is it to excite unmeaning admiration only that Heaven has showered on you its most precious gifts ? There has been a time in which you thought you had received them for no other purpose than to make me happy.

After a year's stay in Derbyshire, Lady Ossory was attacked with an indisposition which seemed to threaten a consumption ; immediate assistance a little re-established her health ; but in the beginning of the winter she fell again into a languor which made every one apprehensive for her life. Her danger, her amiable resignation, and engaging sweetness, during the course of her distemper, affecting me infinitely, I became assiduous about her. When I reflected on my conduct towards her, I was afraid I had given her cause to be unhappy ; I redoubled my cares and my attention, to efface the impression which my indifference might possibly have made on her mind : I never left her chamber ; I gave her all her medicines with my own hand. I felt in those moments all the force of the bond which united us ; I had not fulfilled its duties, and I reproached myself bitterly for my neglect.

I supported her one day to gain a little gallery, in which she had an inclination to attempt walking ; her weakness forced her to be in a manner carried in my arms : after going a few steps, she turned back into the chamber, seated herself, and still lean-

leaning upon me, perceived that I pressed her gently to my bosom: she seemed surprised, regarded me attentively, and seeing in my eyes all the marks of the most affectionate and tender compassion, she, took one of my hands, and bathing it with her tears, 'I am very unhappy' said she, 'to cause you so much uneasiness, but I was destined to afflict you: the state I am in, would raise a flattering hope in a heart less generous than yours: my death will break those bonds which constrain you: that chain under which you have so long groaned, and the weight of which you have been scarce able to bear. A strong attachment had prepossessed your soul; I have no right to complain of it; my gratitude is, and ought to be, the greater; but pardon, pardon my Lord, pardon these tears; it is the first time I have dared to shed them before you: I have concealed my poignant sorrows in my own breast: your goodness, the tender pity I see this moment in your eyes, my approaching dissolution, have drawn from me the confession of a sentiment which has not been in your power to return. So much respect, so many benefits heaped on me, to make amends for that love which you have refused me,

whilst

‘ whilst they made me admire still more the
‘ husband I adored, have, without ceasing,
‘ embittered the regret of not possessing
‘ the power to please him. I wish ’ con-
‘ tinued she, ‘ that the person whose idea
‘ has shut your heart against me, may pre-
‘ serve for you a tenderness worthy of your
‘ constancy. I imagined I ought to hide
‘ from you my tender attachment, to spare
‘ you the proofs of it ; the dread of being
‘ importunate, forced me to stifle even
‘ the strong emotions of my gratitude ;
‘ suffer them to break forth in these last
‘ moments. You have sacrificed to the
‘ honour of an unfortunate creature, a
‘ good which was dear to you : may it be
‘ restored to you when she is no more !
‘ And may my ardent prayers draw down
‘ upon you all the blessings of that hea-
‘ ven which hears me, which calls me
‘ hence, and where I hope soon to be em-
‘ ployed in watching over the happiness of
‘ my generous benefactor ; of him who
‘ made so godlike an effort, that he might
‘ not abandon me to that shame, from
‘ which death itself would not have se-
‘ cured me. Love my daughter ; love
‘ her, my Lord, and forget the miseries
‘ her unhappy mother has brought up-
‘ on you.’ Lady Ossory might have
spoken

spoken for ever without fear of interruption : every word she pronounced was a dagger that stabbed me to the heart. I had neglected her, it was now too late to repair by a behaviour more tender, that long indifference of which she had had but too much sensibility. Ah ! Madam ! how terrible is it to have done a wrong, and how severely would the injured know themselves revenged, if they could comprehend the bitter effects of remorse in a feeling and virtuous heart ! I sent to London for Doctor Lewin, and Doctor Harrison ; I called in all in whose skill it was possible she could have the least confidence. It is not to you, madam, that I am afraid to confess the ardent desire I had of saving her : but neither her youth, nor the assistance of art, could recover her from a state already desperate : she expired in my arms ; and in spite of the assurances they gave me of the nature of her distemper, a distemper born with her, and which the delicacy of her constitution could not long have resisted, I regarded myself with abhorrence as one of the causes of her death : I recollected incessantly what she had said to me ; I could not console myself for not having had power enough over my soul, to dissemble at least, and conceal from her that
that

that another possessed my heart. But when one has lost all hopes of being happy one's self, is it possible to be always attentive to the happiness of another?

As soon as this melancholy scene was a little effaced from my memory, I reflected with transport that you were still free: I flattered myself a passion once so tender, was not entirely extinguished; that you preserved the remembrance of it; that my presence, and the sincere recital of my unhappy adventure, might yet be able to revive it. The knowledge of your character helped to deceive me: I will confess my crime, said I, she will hear me, she will pity, will forgive me—How cruelly have you destroyed the sweet illusion!

As I quitted London only to spare you the displeasure of meeting a woman bearing the name which you had condescended to make choice of, in determining to change your own, I returned thither three months after the death of Lady Ossory. With what ardor did I approach the place inhabited by you! What a lively desire had I to see you, to speak to you, to hear the pleasing sound of that lov'd voice!—I arrived; I ran to seek you; as I passed
by

by Lady Bellville's door, I observed some servants in your livery; I was told you were there: my impatience made me overlook the indiscretion of the step I was taking: I went in; I saw you; you knew me again: what anger was on your countenance, what disdain in your eyes! You seized a pretence for putting an end to your visit; you retired; and I remained there; immoveable, pierced with grief: and self-convicted that I merited those marks of a contempt which I found it impossible to support. I called in vain at your door; I wrote to you in vain; my letters constantly refused, my efforts to see you rendered fruitless by your precautions; all my attempts unattended with success, threw me into a despair of appeasing your resentment. I only obtained the compassion of your woman, who had very little influence over you. Castle-Cary did not dare to interest himself openly for me, through fear of displeasing Lady Henrietta. At length, you filled up the measure of your cruelty; you left London, and it was not long before I followed you. Halifax came to purchase an estate here; I accompanied him; I wrote to you: with what haughtiness did you receive this proof of my tenderness! You answered me only to deliver

deliver yourself from my importunities ; with a pride, an inflexibility, to which your heart is naturally a stranger, and in which I discovered nothing of the gentle, the amiable soul of Lady Catesby. After leaving me three days in the most painful suspense, 'twas to demand your letters you wrote to me—Your letters! Ah! never ask them of me—I can never consent to restore them—I fancied you softened: the goodness, which interested you for my life, appeared to me a return of that tender inclination, which once attached you to me: I flattered myself that friendship at least would plead in my favour: But I was deceived; you no longer loved me; my presence filled you with horror; it deprived you almost of life: the sight of a lover once preferred, once tenderly beloved, spread, over your cheeks the paleness of death. Is it then true that I have lost all hope of softening your heart? Can nothing rekindle the tender flame?—But you have reason for this cruelty, madam; I ought only to complain of myself. I should be happy indeed, if I could complain of you—With what pleasure should I then have pardoned—Ah! Lady Catesby! If you ever deign to think of a man whom you believe faithless and ungrateful, what
 advan-

advantages have you over him ! You may hate, despise, him whom you overwhelm with affliction ; whilst he cannot but esteem, revere, adore her who renders him the most unhappy of mankind.

Poor Lady Ossory ! How her story touches me ! Can I refuse my tears to her deplorable destiny ? What strength of mind ! To adore her husband, yet conceal her love from him, on the noble principles of tender respect and gratitude ! Why did he not love her ? Why did he not make her happy ! She was worthy of his attachment. Why did he avoid her ? Why afflict a heart so full of sensibility ? Had she not a right to his tenderness ? What cruelty to deprive her of it ? I am shocked at the inhumanity of his behaviour, and cannot approve of that unsocial chagrin, of which he made her the victim. Unfortunate Miss Montford ! She who banished you the hear of your husband, ardently wishes to recall you to life, to see you possessed of a heart which ought to have been yours : She would not disturb your happiness—Alas ! my dear Henrietta ! What a difference ? I have
O wept,

wept, but Lady Offory has died—I reproach myself for having hated her: I was very unjust, very inhuman: it was her part to have detested me. I am sensibly affected at her death. Since he gives me permission, I will send you the packet. I know not yet what to think—Ah! that amiable Miss Montford! How melancholy has been her fate! She whom I thought so happy!

LET.

LETTER XXXVII.

Saturday, Winchester.

LORD Offory had reason to say, the species of his offence was unknown to me. How could I have imagined?—What a strange adventure!—That closet—That fatal darkness—His daring presumption—He calls it a misfortune—I forgot my love, says he—Yes, these men are extremely inclined to be forgetful: it is however possible their hearts and their senses may act independently of each other: they tell us so at least, and by these pretended distinctions reserve the liberty of being excited by love, seduced by pleasure, or hurried away by instinct. But observe, my dear, they will not admit us to avail ourselves of the poor excuse they so confidently plead in regard to themselves: those emotions, though divided in them, are united in us. This is certainly acknowledging a great superiority in our manner of thinking; but at the same time reducing us to a terrible uncertainty,

tainty as to the nature of those sentiments which lead them to seek our favour : how is it possible we can ever distinguish by which of these impressions they are actuated, the effects being so similar, and the cause so hidden ?

However, my dear Henrietta, this perfidious, this ungrateful, this treacherous lover, has only been inconstant——Scarce even that——His head disordered——His reason distracted——Ah ! what a distraction ! How many tears has it cost me ! Is it possible I can forgive it ? But why did Lord Offory leave me two years in ignorance of this fatal secret ? He has given a reason——What has he suffered ! What probity, what generosity in such a sacrifice ! He speaks of his daughter : Amiable little Innocent ! says he ——I am pleased to see this tenderness in his nature——Poor babe ! I believe, my dear, I shall love her too——Ah ! if he had told me this at Hertford, what tears would he have spared us both ! I should have put myself in his place : it would have been infinitely less painful to me to have yielded him up, than to see myself abandoned : I should have found consolation in the share I should then have had in the nobleness of his behaviour : I should have lamented
him

him without doubt, but my sorrows would have lost much of their poignancy. I should not have hated, have despised him : on the contrary, he would have preserved all my esteem. Friendship would have joined us in those refined, those tender bonds, so dear to virtuous hearts. He would not have buried himself in the north of England to avoid me ; we should have continued to see each other : I should have loved Lady Offory : what right should I then have had to complain ? Why might not this amiable woman have been my companion, my friend ? She would perhaps have been still living. I should not have had reason to reproach myself with having been the innocent cause of her afflictions. But to what purpose, are all these suppositions, with which I tire you ? Lady Offory is dead. Her Husband has been culpable : is he yet so ? This is the point which embarrasses me. The reason of his concealing the secret is very trifling : so little confidence in me——But it was his wife——I know not what to resolve.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

Sunday, Winchester.

I SHALL leave this place on Tuesday for Hertford: Abraham is here; his lord has sent him to enquire after me: I believe, however, he is less anxious about my health, than my answer. The affecting death of Lady Ossory damped the first transports of my joy; the soft impression of pity is yet strong; but my heart speaks, and will be heard in its turn. Is it possible even you, my dear Henrietta, can conceive the happiness I feel at this moment? Lord Ossory is not unworthy my tenderness; how sweet is it to grant to his merit, what I feared I should have yielded only to my prepossession in his favour! He has not acted inconsistently with those distinguished qualities, which first gave him possession of my soul: the lover who is soon to appear again in my presence, is estimable, sincere, generous—Ah! all is pardoned, all is forgot! I will not make him purchase by submission, by anxiety by suspense, a favour
he

L E T T E R XXXVIII. 163

he so earnestly entreats: an immediate reconciliation shall be the reward of his confidence——How happy is it that he has thus opened all his heart to me! I will write to him instantly: why should I defer a moment the pleasure it is in my power to give him! The following is the copy of my letter.

To Lord OSSORY.

You suppose me changed, my lord, but I am still the same. Sensible to your confidence, I think I ought to be no less so to your friendship. I am going to Lord Osmond's: if you come to Hertford, I shall receive Lord Ossory with that lively pleasure which it is natural to feel at the sight of a friend whom one has long imagined lost for ever.

In inviting him to Hertford, in telling him I shall see him with pleasure, have I not said every thing? It is with difficulty I conceal the pleasing emotions of my heart: my joy sparkles in my eyes: every body says I am grown handsomer within
these

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these two days. O, my dear friend, how I wish to see you!

But I have many farewells to take; many parting tears to shed. Poor Sir Harry! He really deserves pity: I have opened my heart to him; he knows my attachment: I thought I owed something to the violent passion he has for me: this confidence, convincing him of my esteem, has calmed his sorrow a little. He will be my friend, he says, the knowledge of my happiness shall console him——His behaviour affects me. Adieu! my dear Henrietta! I expect your congratulations to meet me at Hertford: I shall be there on Thursday, perhaps on Wednesday: you may imagine: I am very impatient to get thither.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXXIX.

Lord O S S O R Y to Lady H E N R I E T T A.

Monday, Hertford.

YOU write, lovely Henrietta, to Lady Catesby: your hand, your arms, were known, but to whom were they to give your letter? Is there such a person in the world as Lady Catesby? if there is, it is not however at Hertford you must seek her. If, instead of that friend so deservedly dear to you, your heart will admit a new object of its esteem, Lady Ossory is ready to answer your tender congratulations: she has opened your letter with a freedom which will perhaps surprise you; but what rights has not this charming woman, this Juliet?—She is mine, for ever mine: no longer Lady Catesby, she is my wife, my friend, my mistress; the good genius who has restored to me all those blessings, of which I have been so long deprived. Permit me, madam, to thank you for the generous warmth, with which
you

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you have always interceded with your lovely friend for my pardon : she has condescended to grant it, and has shewn in this act of goodness, all the nobleness of sentiment of which you know her capable. Yesterday was the day for ever happy——

Lady O S S O R Y.

This impertinent creature ! He will leave me nothing to say to you. O, my dear Henrietta ! They were all united against me : I was only invited hither to be drawn into a snare : my cousin managed the conspiracy ; they did not give me time to breathe. A repenting lover at my feet, relations so dear to me, soliciting for him, a tender heart, the minister present—— Upon my word they married me so hastily, I do not believe the marriage is valid. Lady Osmond is so urgent——so very absolute——

Lady O S M O N D.

I come just in time to vindicate myself,
a Snare, a Conspiracy, a Marriage which
is

L E T T E R X X X I X . 167

is not valid? What would you think of me, my dear Henrietta, if you were less acquainted with my sentiments in regard to our fair friend? Yes, my dear, I have married her to the most amiable nobleman in England. The marriage is valid I assure you : none of the parties concerned have the least desire to break it. Juliet has certainly great reason to complain of me : her happiness has always been one of my most ardent wishes : I believe it now perfect, and I expect your compliments on this occasion.

Lady O S S O R Y

You are expected here with impatience —No feasts, no balls, without my dear Henrietta ; I should have said, no happiness, if the person whose eyes follow my pen, was not already a little jealous of my tender friendship.

T H E E N D .

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